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B. M. MALABARI



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RAMBLES WITH THE PILGRIM  
REFORMER

BY

SIRDAR JOGENDRA SINGH

AUTHOR OF "NURJAHAN AND NASRIN," ETC., ETC.

WITH A FOREWORD BY

SIR VALENTINE CHIROL



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RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY DEDICATED


TO THE MEMORY OF THE

LADY HARDINGE OF PENSURST

A TRUE FRIEND OF

INDIA





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## FOREWORD

**M**Y friend SIRDAR JOGENDRA SINGH asked me to see his little book through the press, and I am grateful to him for the opportunity he has given me in these simple, unambitious pages of becoming more intimately acquainted with one of the most remarkable characters that modern India has produced.

I met Malabari several times in Bombay and Simla during the later years of his life. The fire of an intensely vital soul seemed to be already consuming the frail body, but to the end he never saved himself. His life was a long struggle to accomplish for himself, and to help his fellow-countrymen to accomplish, the arduous task of reconciling Eastern with Western conceptions and Eastern with Western methods. As is apt to happen in such cases, his manifold activities frequently challenged attacks from both flanks. A far more fervent believer than most Indians in the liberty of the individual—perhaps because he

was a Parsee and had, as such, a purer strain of Aryan blood—he realized more easily and more fully than other Indians, especially Hindus, are able to do, that release from the bondage of archaic social institutions was a far more pressing need for India than emancipation from British political tutelage. Probably the greatest disappointment of his life was that the Indian National Congress gave precedence to political over social reforms. But he pursued his way unmoved with a serene confidence not in any personal triumph of his own, but in the triumph of the cause he had at heart. It is sad to think that he should have passed away without having witnessed the great uplifting which, in the hour of supreme trial, is uniting as never before Europeans and Indians, and all classes, creeds and races throughout India for the fulfilment of their common destiny. To see India welded together with Britain and Greater Britain into an empire which should be the bulwark of peace and freedom throughout the world was the dream of Malabari's life.

VALENTINE CHIROL.

## PREFACE

“**H**EARTS are linked to hearts by God.” Invisible hands forge links which unite men of diverse races and creeds into closest bonds of friendship inevitably and for ever. I heard of Malabari, for the first time, from my friend Sirdar Umrao Singh. He described him as a man of genius and a great social reformer.

Sirdar Umra Singh, too, had met him by chance. He and Nawab Zulfiqar Ali Khan were going to England by a steamer which carried Malabari and his son Pheroze Malabari. They were introduced to him on board. The acquaintance ripened into close and life-long friendship, and I was eventually drawn into the circle. It was to a newsagent that I myself owed my first introduction to Malabari. I was travelling in the South, and one evening wandered into the Moore Market at Madras. A newsagent brought me a copy of “East and West,” and asked me to subscribe. I agreed gladly, and gave my address. The first number of the magazine, however, travelled all over India before it reached me.



“East and West” was the first periodical of its kind started in India. I liked everything about it, and some of its articles inspired me with a desire to write. I ventured to send an article on “The Police,” which was readily accepted, and I was asked to write again and again, and in due course became a regular contributor. I owe much of my journalistic training to Malabari and to Mr. George Chesney, of the “Pioneer.” I sought Malabari’s advice on many things, and he wrote to me some inspiring letters. We began to correspond regularly, though we did not meet for some time.

It was two or three years later that this opportunity occurred. Malabari asked me to come and stay with him at Bandora. Sirdar Umrao Singh was also going to Bombay, and I accompanied him. This was my first visit. We were met at the railway station by Mr. Burjorji Byranjpe, who carried us off to Malabari’s delightful seaside home. Such was the beginning of a friendship, which I shall always value as one of the greatest things in my life. The friendship of men like Sirdar Umrao Singh, Malabari, and Nawab Zulfiqar Ali Khan makes the world brighter, and gives a quality of its own to life.

We found in the house at Bandora Mr. Bulchand Dayaram of Haiderabad, a devoted public worker, and Diwan Dayaram Giddumal, who all through life has lived for God only. Diwan Dayaram and

Sirdar Umrao Singh had long discussions; the one believes in good works and active life, the other, poet and artist by nature, had wandered into the dry and dusty paths of philosophy, and having become a follower of Tolstoi, would not admit that any social organization could be for the ultimate good of humanity. When sometimes the discussion became very hot, Malabari would gently put in a word which set the whole company laughing. We all enjoyed his flashes of wit and humour, and his large, generous ideas about men and things. Since that memorable meeting we four, Sirdar Umrao Singh, Nawab Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Malabari, and myself, spent our annual holidays together, whether at Bandora, Lahore, Simla, or Calcutta. But alas! our rambles together came to an untimely end. Just when we had all gathered again at Simla in 1912 Malabari was suddenly called away from the world which he had done so much to brighten for us.

I am now going to tell the story of these rambles. I shall be with him again in spirit till my book is finished. In the walks we had together he used to discuss almost everything concerning India and England. His powers of conversation were marvellous. I remember an English gentleman once calling to see him at Calcutta and asking his views on the political situation. Malabari began to speak slowly, steadied himself more than once before

warming up, and unconsciously assumed his usual meditative attitude, resting his chin on the palm of his hand, and looking gently out of his dark grey eyes. Then he unfolded the situation in calm dispassionate words that carried conviction home. I had never heard him talk like this before. At the end of the talk he turned toward me and addressing the visitor, said: "Now he will tell you more about it." What could I add to his masterly exposition of the situation? And yet he has left no concrete and enduring monuments of his multifarious labours, and of the unique influence he exerted in so many directions. No great legislative triumph is associated with his name, with the exception of the AGE OF CONSENT BILL. There is a risk, therefore, that a later generation may realize his great work but imperfectly, unless it is explained and recorded by those who came in contact with his elevating and vivifying personality.

And now that he is gone, and our walks round Jakko have come to an end, I am trying to give to the world what he bestowed on me so lavishly; his thoughts on some of the most vital problems of India; his aspirations, his hopes of the future. I wish I had the power to reproduce his own words and his own arguments, which will lose much in my rendering. His mature opinions have been translated here in disconnected thoughts,



halting phrases, and broken sentences. How I wish he himself or some one abler than I could hold my pen. But alas, in the words of Hafiz: "When even the high heavens could not carry the burden of trust, they cast lots and it fell upon such a poor fool as me." It has been my endeavour to fulfil this trust, which the generous co-operation of Sir Valentine Chirol has made so much the easier. It must have taxed his patience a good deal to wade through my disjointed story, and give it the benefit of his wide and varied experience. Here again Malabari has brought East and West together for the service of this ancient land, and it is in this union that lies the salvation of India.

JOGENDRA SINGH.

AIRE ESTATE,  
UNITED PROVINCES,  
INDIA.



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# B. M. MALABARI

## CHAPTER I

### CHILDHOOD

BRITISH INDIA was still in the making, when mutiny broke out, aiming at the overthrow of the Government of the "Company Bahadur." It was the last desperate effort of the fighting classes for supremacy. They found themselves enmeshed in an invisible net which held them under control and exacted obedience, removing all opportunities of wild adventure. They could hardly accept their fall as inevitable, and rebelled against the change. The simmering discontent among the higher classes slowly infected the Army. Hindus and Muhammedans alike rejoiced at the prospect of a return to power, and helped to raise the tempest which they were entirely unfitted to direct and control. The masses and the moneyed classes devoutly prayed for the success of the British arms. Many of the ruling princes and Sikh soldiers, only recently subdued, rushed forward at the call of a foreign power, and fought

shoulder to shoulder under the British flag in the cause of peace and good government. The rebel dream of a general insurrection failed entirely. It only served to establish more firmly the triumph of order over the forces of anarchy. India passed under the British Crown, unconsciously receiving more than it ever hoped for—the rights and privileges of British citizenship.

It was just a few years before the mutiny, probably in 1853, that Malabari was born. A great crisis in human affairs usually leaves its impress on the plastic minds of those who are born under its influence. Malabari passed from childhood to youth in an atmosphere which was full of the stories of the mutiny; the atrocities which the mutineers committed, and the scarcely less cruel reprisals on the part of the soldiers. People also talked of the “Mulki Lat,” the Viceroy and Governor General, who, unmoved by the torrent of grief and passion which raged around him, was determined to act righteously.

Malabari was quite a young man when Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India, renewing her promise to her Indian subjects in the name of the whole British people of the rights and privileges of British citizenship. Her proclamation at the great Durbar at Delhi is now regarded as the Magna Charta of India. It was these first impressions which imperceptibly fostered in Mala-

bari the growth of an unswerving confidence in the good intentions of the British Government, and the futility of unreasoning discontent. Early in life he came to believe that the influences brought into play by Western Education were the only forces to be relied upon for the liberation of human intelligence from the trammels of caste and for the achievement of individual freedom. Malabari saw the hand of God in the shaping of events, which were bringing East and West together for the fulfilment of a Divine purpose.

As a boy he came in touch with a warm-hearted Irish missionary, and he found that colour was no bar to mutual esteem when hearts were united in noble aspiration. He often told me, that he felt as if he belonged to both India and England; that to the East he owed his birth and his traditions, but that it was the West that helped the development of his mind, and claimed his love and allegiance equally with his motherland.

The self-made man is not peculiar to any epoch. If he is more in evidence in recent times, it is because the trend of modern civilization has helped in the making of the individual. In all ages and in all spheres of activity great men have fought their way up from the lowest rung of the ladder to the summit of power and influence. To the superman difficulties are merely incentives to conquest, they are stepping stones to the mount of glory.

There is, therefore, nothing surprising in the fact that Malabari was born to a small clerk in the service of the Gaekwar of Baroda. But he stands pre-eminent in this, that sprung from humble parentage, and knowing the disadvantages inherent to a prolonged struggle with poverty, he remained all through undazzled by riches and rank, and untempted by power. In the day of his greatest triumph he turned his back upon worldly success, and helped the more effectively all who sought his assistance—from the poorest ryot to the proudest Rajah.

Malabari's father, Dunji Baai Mehta was a small clerk in the office of the Gaikwar. Malabari could tell little about him, except what he heard from his mother, and she only spoke of her troubles. His father died when he was barely five, and his mother, a helpless widow, was compelled to seek shelter with her parents at Surat. The prospect must have been gloomy indeed, when a helpless young woman, burdened with a child of tender years, set out on a journey which was at the time by no means free from danger. There was no railway in those days, and the spirit of adventure, finding all avenues to honourable fighting closed, had turned to freebooting and highway robbery. People travelled in large parties for self-protection, but poor Bhikhibai could not wait for a caravan, and had to start on her journey alone.



She put her trust in God, and with her little son Behram left Baroda for Surat. Her faith met its own reward; her very helplessness became her protection. Who would trouble a poor girl mother, trudging wearily along? She picked her way from village to village, taking shelter for the night at humble wayside rest-houses, and starting again on her journey long before sunrise.

In pre-railway days there was usually nothing of the present day rush and scramble; travellers formed large parties, and set out at dawn, when the fresh perfume-laden breeze filled the earth with a new life. They stopped under a clump of trees when the sun became too hot; starting again late in the afternoon, walking or driving slowly onward under starlit skies, passing the night wherever they found a convenient halting place.

From Baroda to Surat is now a journey of a few hours, but it was not till the evening of the seventeenth day that Bhikibai reached her parental home, and here a fresh misfortune awaited her. She arrived only to find the whole quarter ablaze, and the family roof was burnt down before her very eyes. Her parents received her kindly, and did all that they could to alleviate her sorrow.

Surat now became the home of Malabari. His mother married again, and it was the name of his stepfather that he was destined to bear. The love of his mother brightened his little home, and he

found all doors open to him, Hindu, Muhammedan, and Parsi. He was welcomed by all, and all through life he remained a friend of all communities.

The Parsi population at Surat was fairly large. It was probably at Sanjan, between Surat and Bombay, that the Parsi refugees, "the Pilgrim Fathers," from Persia, first found shelter. They came thousands of miles away from the land of their forbears as homeless wanderers, in order to preserve their faith and worship Ahurmazad in their own way. They were welcomed by the Raja of Sanjan. They built Fire Temples and Towers of Silence all over Gujerat, showing that they had come to stay, and were determined to follow the law of Zoroaster. And as they met with no opposition they offered no active resistance to the influences that surrounded them. The result was that in the course of a few generations their social life became very largely Hinduized. Finally the disintegrating influence of Western thought accomplished what great armies had failed to achieve. Those whose forefathers had preferred voluntary exile in order to preserve their ancient faith, were themselves led to undermine its foundations. The Parsis still visit the Fire Temples and expose their dead in the Tower of Silence, but the faith that clothed antique custom with life and gave primitive ceremonies a meaning, has in a great

measure evaporated, leaving modern Parsis nearer in thought and spirit to the European sceptic.

The Parsi community at Surat was beginning to feel the effects of Western solvents when Malabari with his mother came to Surat; but it had not as yet broken with the past. He was therefore brought up in an atmosphere which reflected the old brotherly life of the East; and all classes and creeds lived as neighbours. Malabari was welcomed in all houses; only his stepfather, Mehrawanji Malabari, was not kind to the boy. He was absorbed in business, and had little time, and perhaps still less inclination for the gentler aspects of life. His irritability was aggravated by a loss at sea which swallowed up his small fortune, and late in life he had to start as a herbalist. He often employed young Malabari to pound drugs for him.

It is strange how an unknown power places us in special surroundings with parents, class affinities and national tendencies all fixed, without any choice of our own. Long before we are able to understand our environment, a thousand invisible factors play upon the childish mind and mould the character of the future man for all times. The "Pilgrim Reformer" was given a home which brought him in touch with real life. His mother was one of those soulful women who live for others only. Her unfailing sympathy and selfless

devotion awakened in the heart of the child that instinct of compassion which guided him all through life.

Malabari was in due course sent to a "Path-Shala" for his education. I cannot do better than give a pen portrait of his school by Malabari himself:

"My first school was just behind our house at Nanpur. Narbhairam Mehtaji was my first teacher. He was a Bhikshu Brahmin, tall, majestic, and taciturn. The School was a commodious little shop with an elevated square for the master. On the square squatted the master and on the floor squatted his flock, Hindu and Parsi. There was no fee to be paid for the instruction—only a handful of grain, a few flowers or some fruit now and then. There were no tables nor benches, nor slates nor pencils nor books nor maps; not one single item of the literary paraphernalia of the modern schoolroom. Each pupil had a wooden board ('Patti') which served him for a slate, and a pointed stick ('Lekhna') which he used as pencil. He also carried with him a rag. With this piece of cloth he shifted the dust over the board, and on that board he traced the figures and numerals. The task work was submitted every noon to the Master, who held a rod in his hand with one end pointed. Glancing over the dust work, he would now give a grunt of satisfaction and strike the



board with the pointed end of his stick. The figures of dust would at once disappear, and so would the lucky pupil for lunch. If unluckily the task was badly done Narbhairam would apply the butt end of the rod to the pupil, instead of to his board. There were worse methods, of course, the sharp and supple cane, the pebble under the knee, the stone across the shoulders, the twisting of the nose, and the shaking of the neck. Worse still, sometimes the little urchin was swung across the beam, and at times stripped of his scanty dress. Oh the torture of the midday ordeal! How my heart sank within me as I crawled up to the Master's Gaddi. Life or death—which was it to be? I died on an average two deaths a month. That was because I was too small to deserve attention, quite a beginner. But for all that whenever Nirbhairam condescended to notice me, he did it heartily.

“But to return to the schoolroom. The written work was gone through in the forenoon. The boy was expected to say by rote the  $\frac{1}{4}$ th, the  $\frac{1}{2}$ th, the  $\frac{3}{4}$ th,  $1\frac{1}{4}$ , the  $1\frac{1}{2}$  the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  of any number up to 100. These were respectively called Paya Ardhi, Pauna, Savaya Dodha, Adhua and Otha. Like the fractions came the integers up to  $100 \times 100$ . Thus Pachi Pachisa Chhapachisa ( $25 \times 25 = 625$ ) and so on from  $1 \times 1$  up to  $100 \times 100 = 10,000$ .

“ The process was a powerful aid to memory. I doubt if the ablest Professor of Mathematics or even the readiest Finance Minister of the day commands such an elastic and almost intuitive power of manipulating figures.

“ We learnt the alphabet also on the same plan. Every letter had a nickname and a familiar versified description. That is to say, the form of the letter was likened to some object of common use, and thus impressed upon the mental vision. Europeans are coming to that system, judging from recent publications of juvenile literature. There was a fair amount of literary instruction, too, imparted at Narbhairam's school. Some verses from Ramayana and Mahabharata done into simple Gujrati for the occasion, served as history as well as poetry. I excelled in this as also in letter-writing. What splendid letters I dictated to my seniors, myself ignorant of the art of writing, letters from wife at Surat to husband at Mumbai Bandar, now gushing, now whining, now asking for a remittance, now threatening to go to the parents' house! Letters from the principal of a firm at Cambay to his factory at Karachi advising the departure of the good ship 'Ruparel,' laden with pearls and precious stones! Letters from father at Broach to his son at Delhi with the love of the distracted mother and with a basketful of advice as to how to live in 'that remote

country.' I enjoyed these studies exceedingly well, and was often presented with fruit or flower and the cheering word 'Ja Bacha aj tane chhutti chhe' ('Go, Boy, you are free to-day'). But when it came to figures, I was usually an 'uncle of the camel,' 'born of blind parents' and other things indescribable. I was bad at receiving the rod, so much so that the flogging of a neighbour would send me directly into a fever. Narbhairam knew this, and was kind enough to send me out of the room when a culprit had to be hauled up.

"One day a refractory boy had to be brought to his senses. Narbhairam had tried all his punitive regulations on him. This time, therefore, he made him kneel upon pebbles, and placed a heavy slab on his back, and over the stone he himself pretended to sit. This was the last straw, and the boy gave such a shriek of agony and fright that his mother and grandmother came running to the scene; they lived next door to the school. These dames were well known for their muscular development. They went up to Nirbhairam, gave him a good deal of Billingsgate, and released the boy. He was withdrawn that day. I, too, went home, never to return to the school again. At night I was in high fever, and shortly after in the clutches of Sitala Mata, the goddess of Small Pox. I was not expected to outlive the shock, but was somehow brought round, as my poor mother said,

by daily prayers and sacrifices on her part, and by nightly vigils before a small silver figure sprinkled with red ochre, the *mata*.

“For weeks together she had lived upon parched rice and water once a day. And this was her reward, she explained to our friends in meek thankfulness, when they met at our house to do justice to the good things prepared in honour of my second birth.”

From this Swadeshi reservoir of national education, the sensitive boy was transferred to an Anglo-Vernacular school, and now began his literary education which was to open to him the treasures of Western thought and enlist him for the service of the country.

The school merely supplements the real education begun at home. The example that the parents set; their self-control, charity, frugality, and other domestic virtues, which go unnoticed, play upon the infant mind and shape the character of the future man. In the East more than in the West, where natural reserve and a hurried existence keep people apart, moral culture and the spirit of the race are transmitted by the contact of children with their parents and others who surround them from infancy.

An Indian villager, who has never been to school, and can hardly discriminate between a letter and the scrawl made by his plough, is often



a man of high aspirations and an unclouded understanding. The village tree is a school, open at all times and to every one. The ideas that are exchanged under it pass from father to son in unbroken line, and have no small educative influence. Learned Sanyasis and well educated Brahmins often stop under the village tree, and propound philosophical truths. The old men of the village recount their experiences, and convey to the younger generations the knowledge which has been handed down from mouth to mouth for generations. Thus continue unbroken the traditions of the East and its ancient usages. The villager cannot read and write, but none the less his mind is well stocked with moral precepts, and he has a clear understanding of social duties.

Young Behram went to school overflowing with animal spirits, and a love of fun and frolic. He was a healthy boy, and his little wants were easily satisfied. Boyhood is the only period when freshness of life is not deceived by desire. For a while Malabari enjoyed life intensely. On off days he followed the "Khialis," the poor wandering minstrels who sing away their lives. He had a capital voice, and often joined the street singers from sheer exuberance of youthful spirits. He would sometimes go on repeating a single line of a popular song till the words seemed to lose their conventional meaning, leaving a strange sensation of

vibrating harmony, a clear throbbing note of the spirit. He would often wander with the singers listening to stories of the heroic age. At such moments he yearned for glory. The lives of great men, sung with real feeling, evoked his unstinted admiration, and kindled a glow of generous emotions. He listened to songs of passion and heroism; of selfless devotion and indomitable courage, which carried him out of himself, transporting him for the moment into the realms of glory, and awakened in him that chivalrous sympathy and deep understanding which was all his own.

Life for him in his early years was full of romance. He would sometimes accompany a party of young maidens, who, with their pitchers daintily poised on their heads, went to draw water from the common well. He would play upon his bamboo flute whilst the girls filled their pitchers. The music awakened strange longings in youthful hearts, undefined and undefinable. They would turn back and cast timid glances into space vaguely searching for the unattainable. In the case of a delicate girl, the boy would draw up her pitcher for her as he whistled a favourite air. With him romance and service went always together.

Boys will be boys, and they had more of the boyish spirit in those days than they have in these days of high pressure education. Malabari and his companions would of an evening go up to an old

betel-seller who at fifty had married a girl of fifteen, teasing him with the question, "Uncle, where is your daughter?" "You fool, she is your mother," was the quick reply. "I will remind my forgetful father," some one would retort, and they would run away, roaring with laughter as the old man sat grinding his teeth. The young wife often entered into the spirit of the joke, and would peep out from behind her door with an arch smile, followed by a sigh. She seemed to wish she were a boy, and could join in teasing her grandfatherly husband.

Sometimes these little jokes ended very seriously. One day the boys shut Malabari in and challenged him to open the door. He pushed with all his might; the door was rotten at the hinges and gave way, falling on the boys on the other side, with his own weight upon it. No one was seriously hurt, but the headmaster was very angry; and the boys were sentenced to receive a dozen stripes each. The chief offender would not submit till he was persuaded by his own teacher to hold out his hand. The first stroke sent a tremor through his body, and he almost fainted. The headmaster stopped, but there was such a revolution going on in the heart and brain of the boy that he threw down his bundle of books and bolted from school never to return to it again. He had not then learnt to put himself in the place of those

in authority, or to consider the apparent strength of the case against himself.

He ran down to his mother to complain, but found her in the grip of cholera. In a moment he forgot all his sufferings, and sat beside her bed, ministering to her comfort, weeping in the anguish of his heart, and praying earnestly that she might be spared to him. He could not believe his beloved mother was dying. He sat hopeful by her side, rubbing her hands and feet, and watching and praying ceaselessly. For two days the patient hovered between life and death, but on the third day she finally closed her eyes on this earth. The boy could not realize that she was gone. He hoped on even after the end had come, till friends and neighbours came and removed the body, and carried it to the Tower of Silence. The boy followed the sad, silent procession, praying for a miracle to restore his mother to life. None happened. . . . The heart that had emptied its treasure upon him had ceased to beat; the eyes that sparkled with love for him were closed for ever. The white robed wardens of the Chamber of Death came and carried her body into the unknown gloom, and left it there. The last shred of hope was gone. In a single night he lived as if through a hundred years. The spirit of youth was gone from him for ever; the world seemed to him enveloped in a shroud of darkness without hope and without

joy, though in time he was yet again able to feel that

Pleasure is spread through the earth

In stray gifts, to be claimed by whoever shall find.

At the moment he felt the hand of death on everything; even the warm sunshine that he loved seemed to breathe a message of death in the shadows that it created and destroyed. He no more sang and played with the boys, or wandered with his flute to amuse the girls drawing water from the well. He became the silent self-communing figure that he was known to be ever after. Not that the melancholy mood held sway over him entirely. His poetic soul asserted itself, and his sense of humour lifted the cloud from the horizon, and then his eyes would sparkle with the gleam of mirth, and he would enjoy a hearty laugh. But usually when he was alone, sitting or walking by himself, he looked like one for whom the world had no illusions. He seemed to look beyond into the vale of tears, hidden away, though it is by sunshine and flowers.

Nature moulds human character in strange ways. It endowed Malabari with a keen appreciation of life, and yet dashed the cup out of his hands before he had put his lips to it. The boy poet was brought face to face with death, and was never able to forget that which encompasses human life. Such trials are the proof stones of life. They



test the influences of home and social surroundings, and definitely determine the future. The petals of character open in easy harmony, but the frost and hot winds of misfortune break and tear them, and many a delicate flower withers away, carrying its perfume unshed.

The youthful mourner struggled through his grief and despair. What was personal ambition, love of power and greed of wealth when life depended on a breath? Then, over the gloom of despair rose the dawn of hope. He felt the hand of love that turns all our sorrows, all our sufferings and disappointments into a harvest of peace. He bowed before the inevitable in humility and resignation. He resolved to prepare himself for service, so that he might one day become an instrument of Divine Love. The poet of twelve now turned to philosophy for solace; Brahmanic, Buddhistic and Persian by turn, reverting after an interval of many years to the robust optimism of the Zoroastrian formula, "good thought, good word, good deed." He did not allow himself to be cheated by vain desires, but lived on, ready to suffer and to serve with a gleam of hope in his eyes. His Gujrati verses woven at this early age, amid a round of study and meditation, are thought-pictures of his soul, revealing the beginnings of his personal creed: There is no happiness for man apart from usefulness.

## CHAPTER II

### EDUCATION AND EARLY SURROUNDINGS

THE death of Malabari's mother brought him face to face with some of the grim realities of life. Hitherto the atmosphere of love, with which she had surrounded him, threw a glamour over his simple life; he was her darling and her prince. Now the dream was broken; his step-father was not disposed to trouble himself about the future of his ward, and left him severely alone, and often vented his ill-humour on the poor motherless orphan.

Another boy in his position might have given way to despair or sulked, but he was determined to work for a future. He managed to join an English school maintained by the Irish Presbyterian Mission. The Rev. Mr. Dixon, who was in charge of the school, was an Irishman, and took to young Malabari with all the impulsive kindness of his race. Malabari in his turn looked up to him with great affection, and his studies became a source of pleasure to him, for that was the only way he could return his friend's kindness. In due

course Mr. Dixon introduced him to Shakespeare, a study which absorbed him completely. One morning he surprised his master by suggesting an explanation of a passage in "Julius Caesar" which had puzzled Mr. Dixon himself.

The Mission School, so far as general instruction was concerned, was not different from the Government Anglo-Vernacular School. It followed the same curricula, and the methods of instruction were not very dissimilar. It was the personality of the teachers that made a vast difference. The spirit of religion infused into the work by the missionary workers created a moral atmosphere which helped the education of the heart, and thereby the formation of character. The Anglo-Vernacular School was purely a secular institution, with a body of teachers who generally felt no zeal for their high calling. They were like prison warders, who saw that the boys loaded their minds with the prescribed texts. It was immaterial whether the pupils understood the meaning of what they learnt, or could apply their knowledge to the furtherance of human happiness.

The system has not changed even now. It is responsible for the ruined health and stunted growth of the present generation. The Mission School had to follow the Educational Code, but it endeavoured to train the youthful mind to think for itself, and the youthful heart to enter upon the

path of faith and devotion. They could not give full attention to all the boys who attended the School, but picked out the more promising students, and helped them to form correct habits of thought.

Mr. Dixon took great pains with Malabari, and often invited him to stay with him for a week end. Mrs. Dixon was kindness itself. It was their sympathy which won over Malabari for ever, and made him a staunch supporter of the British Government, and virtually a Christian in all the important actions of his life. It also helped him to acquire a command over the English language which was the marvel of his school. His fellow students envied the easy fluency with which he could express himself.

In the early days of British rule English education seemed to be the "Open sesame" which unlocked all doors to success, prosperity, and wealth. The pen undoubtedly became the chief means of advancement, and for a really able man no career was too high.

Times change and men with them. In olden days a Deputy Collector, a pleader, or a Sub-Judge bulked larger in the minds of the people than perhaps a High Court Judge or a Member of the Viceroy's Council does to-day. A successful Deputy Collector, who was also a poet, recorded his satisfaction in Urdu verse. "People say that

a poet's profession is ill-omened," he wrote; "but look at me, I began by writing verses, and now I am a Deputy Collector." The ambition of our talented men now soars higher. They naturally aspire to a share in the administration of their own country, and their claims are legitimate. The question of self-government is a very different thing. Western countries have secured it only after centuries of self-denial and incessant striving. We will have to earn it in the sweat of our brow, labouring hard to prepare the ground, and waiting in faith and hope for the day of harvest, which comes in God's own time. For the present the transition from the old into new modes of life is responsible for a great deal of unsettlement of the minds of the people and social and political unrest. Those in authority find it difficult to harmonize the aspirations of the educated classes for a broad and free civic life with the apathy of the villagers, who constitute the real India. They seldom share the enthusiasm to help a fallen people to a new life of social freedom which inspired some of the builders of the British Empire in India.

In the early days of British rule people looked up to Englishmen as givers of peace and justice. The Englishmen, too, were eager to share with their Indian fellow subjects the great gifts which they enjoyed in their own country. There was a pervading spirit of mutual esteem and good will.



It was in such an atmosphere that the mind of young Malabari was nurtured. He simply loved his Irish *Guru*, and delighted to be with him. Unfortunately he had very little time which he could call his own. Like many a poor boy who has to work his way in life, he had to coach younger boys on his own account in order to earn his living and buy himself clothes and books. In one respect he was better off than many of his fellow students. He was not married. There were many in his class who had families at home. Theirs was truly a struggle against terrible odds. They had not only to provide for themselves, but for their wives and children. The parents had done their duty by getting them married and giving them a bit of school education. If they wanted to pursue their studies further, they must shift for themselves.

Malabari in any case had to work for himself only, and he duly qualified himself for Matriculation. At last the day came when he had to go to Bombay and sit for the examination. He had no money. Mr. Dixon spoke to him in general terms, implying that he could draw on him for his expenses, but the boy was too shy, perhaps too proud to ask. He was the envy and admiration of his class, and his circumstances were not unknown to his fellow students. One of his class fellows spoke to his father, who had the reputa-

tion of being a miser. The old man's heart was touched. He sent for the boy and gave him twenty rupees. Was such a man really a miser? How are we to judge? The springs of human action lie beyond the range of human sight, and where nothing is apparent but selfishness an invisible chord may sometimes be touched, leading to a noble action. Twenty rupees seem a mere trifle, but to the orphan it meant a sum not easily to be repaid. The neighbour was not only generous, he was really affectionate. "Do not fret," he said, "you can pay when you can, your honest face is security enough for my money." And he was not mistaken in his reading of the boy's character. Malabari never forgot his kindness, but paid him back many times over, not only in money, but in real gratitude.

Malabari paid ten rupees to the University as the Examination fee, and with the balance in his pocket he left for Bombay to make his way in the world. His only anxiety now was about his stepfather, whose house at Surat was about to be sold by a creditor. He knew no one in Bombay. But he had often heard of a rich Sowcar of whose wealth people spoke with awe. In the simplicity of his heart Malabari believed that such a man would not refuse to help him to pay off his father's debt. He repaired to the house of the rich man. He was admitted into the room, allowed to state

his case, and then laughed out of the presence as a fool. The ingenuous boy turned away from the millionaire disillusioned. He had regarded rich men as the cream of human kindness, patrons of art and learning, and centres of beneficence. He now perceived that poor men often outshine the rich in their love of humanity, and that charity does not always lodge in the house of the wealthy. It was a great disappointment, but he had no time to brood over his failure. He had to devote himself entirely to his studies, resisting even the temptation to see the sights of the great city.

The day fixed for the examination soon came. He was admitted to the Examination Hall along with other boys to whom the question papers were distributed, and the scribbling began. The examination lasted four days, and the boys strained their memories to the breaking point to secure the requisite number of marks for a pass. It was after a month that the result was announced in the Gazette, in which Malabari's name did not appear. He had failed in mathematics.

Bombay the Beautiful, with her splendid buildings, crowded markets, and a cosmopolitan population, drawn together from all parts of the globe in the pursuit of wealth or pleasure, frowned on the poor student. He needed nothing but time and guidance to fight his own battle of life, and there was no one to befriend him. Bombay recog-

nized nothing but success, whether in examination or business. Malabari could not afford to be idle. He looked round for employment, and, after many failures and much suffering, secured an appointment at a school with a salary of twenty rupees a month. He threw his heart into the work, and in leisure hours he read for his matriculation. He was determined to try his luck at the end of another year.

He worked at the school with such diligence that after a time his pay was raised to forty rupees a month, and then to sixty. He earned as much by taking private pupils. For a boy who had entered life with only ten rupees in his pocket this income was more than ample. He rented a room for himself, and settled down comfortably in his own home. He would have been quite content with his lot, but for the examination which loomed large on the horizon. For four long years he struggled for a pass. He failed in 1868, again in 1869, and for the third time in 1870, but at last, in 1871, fortune smiled on him, and his name appeared in the Gazette. But this did not bring him the satisfaction which would have been his if he had passed when he first came to Bombay full of golden dreams. He was now settled in life and had a fixed income, which was more than enough for his wants.

It is well that Malabari did not covet a Univer-

sity degree. Had he continued to pursue the regulation course, a weary grind from examination to examination, culminating in a B.A. or M.A., he would perhaps never have been the man he was, deep and broad in culture, responsive to all that is noble and great in Eastern as in Western thought. To readers unacquainted with the Indian Educational system, this may seem strange, but it was really a great thing that he was saved from the relentless mill which might have crushed and ground out his magnificent powers of heart and mind. What would Malabari have been without his originality?

In Europe a University degree is the indication of preparation for a future career. In India it is conferred as the reward of an overloaded memory at the expense of natural energy and aptitude. The examination is not incidental, a means to an end, but the end itself. The graduate of an Indian University is usually a spent force. The programme of studies has been prepared without any correct appraisal of his mental and physical capacity. The educationalists stand aghast at the idea of what they call "lowering the standard of education." They are always crying out that the standard should be raised, as if the Indian boy could go on swallowing, more and more, the indigestible stuff, which he is constitutionally incapable of assimilating, and which is always destructive of



brain and body for those who are not physically and mentally fit to bear the strain.

In dealing with Malabari's early life, with his prolonged struggles to obtain education, with his repeated failures to pass the matriculation, one cannot but speculate on "the might have been" under more congenial surroundings. What could he not have attained if a kindly fate had given him a congenial home with an environment of hope and freedom, of ease and culture—to him who, in spite of everything, found his way to the mount of vision, and saw through the gilded haze which ensnares humanity.

## CHAPTER III

### THE INFLUENCE OF KHIALIS AND ZOROASTRIANISM

THE formative period of a poet's mind is always a period of great interest. Early in life the "Khialis" fired the imagination of young Malabari, and he loved to feel the thrill of joy and sorrow and infinite longings which their songs awakened, carrying him far away to:

Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam  
Of perilous seas, in faëry lands forlorn.

It was with wandering minstrels he found his way to the world of the muses. He had passed his childhood amid suffering women, and from their own lips heard the story of their woes. He used to tell me that young wives married to men fit to be their fathers, and girl widows came to his mother and poured into her sympathetic ears all their disappointment and despair. He would often sit and listen and weep with them, as the tragedy of their lives obsessed his heart and brain.

Besides these active influences there were the traditions of his own race. "The main fact about

a man is his religion," says Carlyle, and the Parsis had left their country for the sake of their religion. Nations work out their destinies in strange ways. Aryans that made India and Persia their home had but a brief stay, their rise and their decline were equally precipitous. When Europe was fighting its way upwards, India and Persia were suffering from senile decay.

The Persia familiar to us in the works of the great historians, that Persia, which but for a chance might have changed the history of Europe, had fallen on evil days, and as in the case of India, there was no Persian nation to stay the foreign invasion when the followers of the Prophet poured into the country and converted almost the whole population to Islam. Those who refused to change their creed either left their country or resolved to suffer patiently for the faith of their fathers. But still Persia had its glory and its tradition, and when Ferdausi, the great Persian poet, at the request of Mahmud enriched the epic literature of the world by writing his "Shahnameh," such was the wealth of material available, that Mahmud, apprehending ruin, refused to pay the gold mohur for every verse, which he had promised before he realized the potentialities of such a subject.

The Parsis in Persia who remained faithful to the faith of their forefathers were subjected to cruelty and wrong. "Up to 1895 no Parsi was

allowed to carry an umbrella," writes Napier Malcolm, "they could not use eye-glasses, they were prevented from wearing rings, their girdles had to be made of white canvas, they must twist their turban instead of folding it. Up to 1891 all Zoroastrians had to go on foot in towns, and even in the desert they had to dismount if they met a Mussulman. Their houses had to be built so low that the top could be reached by a Mussulman with his hand. They could not trade in the open market. They had to pay a *Jazia* or a Poll Tax."

Such was the life of the Parsis in their own country up till recent times. The Parsis who came to India were welcomed long ago by the Raja of Sanjan: "Welcome to those who walk faithfully in the way of Aharmazad. May their race prosper and increase. May their prayers obtain the remission of their sins! May Lakshmi by her liberality and gifts contribute to their wealth and to the fulfilment of their desires, and ever may their rare merits of race and intellect continue to distinguish them in our midst."

Once settled down in India, the Parsis thrived as agriculturists, traders, and artisans, and slowly adopted Hindu customs and dress, which they have altered and improved upon with such taste that the crowd that now promenades the Malabar Road in the evening rivals any crowd in the world for brightness of colour and grace of drapery.

The fundamental doctrine of the Zoroastrian creed is that from the beginning of the things there exist two spirits, Aharmazad and Aharman, the principles of light and life, of darkness and death. Zoroaster, the Parsi prophet, taught devotion to Aharmazad, the principle of goodness, purity of body and soul, and an eternal war against Aharman, the principle of evil. He spoke from a heart full of love, and left a great following. In the course of time a powerful priesthood fastened upon this simple creed, and hedged it round with an elaborate ritual. They subtly invested his words with hidden meanings, and placed upon them plausible interpretations to suit their own purposes. His abstract speculations were materialized into concrete facts, and his allegorical forms of speech personified to serve a new mythology.

In ancient Persia fire temples were raised on lofty hill tops, soaring heavenward with their flaming fire, while devout worshippers, weary and foot-sore, knelt before the altar, recited their prayers, and went home heart healed. All this is gone now; the great fire temples of Iran, which raised the human soul to a sense of the divine, are in ruins, with no fire burning and no worshipper worshipping. The new fire temples in India built in crowded streets and distinguished only by groups of white-robed priests sitting at the door, afford a painful contrast to those sacred fanes



towering above mountain tops; repositories of the divine fire rising heavenward in all its purity.

We ultimately become what we worship. May it not be that the modern fire temple is responsible for the growing spirit of indifference amongst the Parsis? No religion has ever retained for long the high level which was reached by its founder. The unregenerate crowd cannot rise to the altitudes of spiritual belief in which the Master and his disciples dwelt. They seek shelter in the familiar valleys resting in the lap of sunlight and shadow, and resume their old practices with just a little difference which marks the step that has been taken towards the ideal.

The prayer that goes forth from the lips of a Parsi asks for everlasting light:

"Give us knowledge, sagacity, quickness of tongue, holiness of soul, a good memory, and the understanding that goeth on growing, the understanding which cometh not through learning."

Perhaps Zoroaster, in modern language, would have called this understanding faith, and defined it as the inner knowledge of reality implanted in the heart of man for his guidance. Religion is a thing of the heart and not of the intellect. "The boundless, endless infinite void in the heart of man can be satisfied with nothing but God." Intellectual religion is therefore no religion, and its desert paths are frequented only by lovers of

empty words and subtle arguments. "Tangle on tangle is the path of intellect," said Sadi; "for those who believe there exists nothing but God." Is it possible for the understanding to encompass that which illumines the understanding? The carbon point might as well go searching for the source of the electric fluid. Religion raises man to its divine source, metaphysics hold him down to the glittering foot-board. Well may the Parsis pray for the "understanding which is not of the earth." And it was this simple faith which Malabari's mother professed and implanted in the heart of her son—a faith inspiring practical good work, in however humble a way. She taught him how to pray and to live by trust in God.

Such were the influences that moulded the character of Malabari, and to him all through life there remained the early recollection of a good and loving mother. He remained true to the ideals of his youth, endeavouring to work out in life the plan which possessed his childish fancy. He would have loved to pass his days in some small village in a sphere of peace and simplicity, amid fragrant fields and flowing streams, but the cry of suffering men and women rang in his ears, and he could not refuse their call for rescue. He made his home in Bombay, with the dull gray of the streets as his only landscape, and resolved to elevate the position of women. He thought that

he had but to lift the curtain and to give his countrymen a glimpse of the advantages which social freedom would bring to both the sexes, and they would hasten to the work of its attainment. He was soon disillusioned. He learned what others had discovered before him, that those who talk most are not generally those who devote themselves to enduring work, which demands immediate sacrifice of what they love most—popularity. He himself cared little for popular applause; and was willing to suffer even unpopularity as long as he could help more effectively the cause he had at heart. He continued his own work in the service of women, and of the sick and the weary, unmoved by the opposition that his work encountered. When I met him he had passed through years of stress and storm, and I can recall the first day, as if it were yesterday—the serious smile of welcome, the questioning look from his eyes, the frank and hearty shake of the hand. We walked out in the evening along the sea shore. His face lit up—he drank in with a deep breath the wide landscape. He was full of joy as he pointed to the delicately tinted clouds floating in a golden sky. He seemed immeasurably happy. I said to myself: Life has never stained his youthful chastity of spirit.

## CHAPTER IV

### GUJRATI POEMS

**G**ENIUS has been often defined as akin to madness, and yet it is the man of genius who invests all nature with a divine splendour. He is as the great Hafiz has been called, "the tongue of the invisible." He sees the vanishing rainbow, the golden sunset, and describes them in words of infinite glory. The world cannot understand him, and they call him mad because he does not accept things at their conventional value. For all that it is this unbalanced and over-developed brain that brings down to earth glimpses of divine truth to live in the hearts of men, and make them all the brighter for their presence.

It is the man of genius who has the power to flash deep down to the heart of things, and to express what others feel but dimly, and realize still less clearly—the infinite longings of the human soul for a full and perfect life.

Nature endowed Malabari with the golden gift of genius. He was a singer before he could read and write. He was more of a poet in his early

days, when the "darkening" veil of intellect lay, like the golden haze of the dawn, waiting for sunrise, than in his manhood when social work and politics absorbed him completely.

He sang because the songs came to him, demanded and founded expression. He sang of flowers, and fragrance, and laughter, with an easy grace and fluency which was the marvel of the wandering minstrels. As he grew older, he became essentially spiritual in his aspirations; pressing onward to life's joys and sorrows, and wandering even into the labyrinth of metaphysics. He struck the deepest notes when singing of the woes of Indian women; songs sad and despairing and freighted with infinite pathos. He wrote for his own pleasure. He had no idea of publishing his verses till a friend persuaded him to take them to the Rev. Mr. Taylor, who was known as a warm admirer of Gujrati literature. It is especially the missionaries who cultivate the vernaculars of India successfully, and have done much to enrich them with translations from good books.

Mr. Taylor read young Malabari's verses with keen interest. He was charmed with the young poet's delight in the common things of life, and the sweet homeliness of his language. He could appreciate the beauties of language and sentiment, as he had himself written some verses, and was the author of a Gujrati Grammar. He was all the



more pleased that the boy-poet had broken new ground, and made his songs the vehicles of beautiful thoughts.

Mr. Taylor recognized in the earnestness of the young poet, and the high tone which pervaded his verse, a new champion of social reform and of purer life generally. He insisted on the publication of the poems and introduced Malabari to the Rev. Dr. Wilson, who did so much to popularize English education in Western India.

Dr. Wilson was a remarkable man. He came full of zeal to confute and convert heathen India to Christianity. He began his work by vehement attacks on Indian religions, and instead of winning adherents, he created powerful opponents, and Hinduism eluded him at all points. Then Dr. Wilson reconsidered his position, and decided to devote himself mainly to the cause of education and charity. He gave up polemics, and became a real helper, ready to serve and suffer, and befriend the friendless. The change from a self assertive missionary to a gentle minister of Christ was rich in fruit. His personal life helped to popularize Christianity more than his polemics, which sometimes carried him beyond the bounds of charity. Argument can be met by argument, dialectics by equally subtle dialectics, but nothing can resist the limitless power of love, humility and grace.

In his early career, Dr. Wilson, with all his zeal,

secured only a few converts, and embittered the whole Indian community. He attacked the weak points in their religion, and set them searching for weak points in his own. Later on he became known as the friend of all, devoting himself to the service of all, and he was sought by Hindus, Parsis and Muhammedans for comfort and consolation.

Just at the time of life when Malabari needed contact with a strong and inspiring personality he had the good fortune to meet Dr. Wilson. They parted friends after their first meeting. They met frequently, and Malabari stayed with Dr. Wilson for days together. They became so intimately associated that they might have belonged to one family. In all that was good and useful, their thoughts met in unchanging affinity, and their hearts rejoiced and suffered equally with the joys and sorrows of others. Dr. Wilson affirmed that the salvation of India lies in Jesus Christ, while Malabari held, that without the living personality of a prophet the conversion of a whole population was not possible, though he hoped that some day all religions would find their inner unity. This was their only point of difference, the one sought to attain it for the people through Christ, the other by educating the people in righteous living. When it came to practical work, they both found themselves working together, and realized that

caste and creed were of little account when hearts were inspired by a common aim, and devoted to the service of suffering men and women.

Friendships which are brought about by self interest rest on shifting sands, and give way as soon as the parties fail to afford each other the requisite amount of profit or pleasure. But when two hearts are drawn by mutual attraction to each other, the foundations of friendship are laid deeper, and become an unfailing source of comfort and strength. Just when Malabari made the acquaintance of Dr. Wilson, he formed the friendship of Mr. Shahpoorjee Bhala, who afterwards embraced Christianity. Malabari many years after wrote: "If anything could have converted me to Christianity it was Shahpoorjee's example. His faithfulness to Christ, and his fortitude were most edifying. Dr. Wilson loved Shahpoorjee as a son, and I myself owe much of Dr. Wilson's kindly regard to Shahpoorjee. I look upon Shahpoorjee's family as my own. His father is one of the worthiest and yet one of the most unlucky men I have known."

Malabari himself was very much attracted by the noble doctrine of Christ, and the great work which missionaries were doing in India. In a letter to Principal Wordsworth, he wrote: "And how much do we owe to Christian Missionaries? We are indebted to them for the first start in the

race of intellectual emancipation. It is to them that we are beholden for some of our most cherished political and social acquisitions. Our very Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj and Prarthna Samaj are the off-shoots in one sense of this beneficent agency. And apart from its active usefulness, the Christian Mission serves as a buffer for the tide of scepticism, usually inseparable from intellectual emancipation. At a time when doubt and distrust are taking the place of reasoned enquiry among the younger generation of India, I feel bound to acknowledge in my own person the benefits I have derived from contact with the spirit of Christianity. But for that holy contact, I could scarcely have grown into the staunch and sincere Zoroastrian that I am, with a keen appreciation of all that appeals readily to the intelligence, and a reverent curiosity for what appeals to the heart, knowing full well that much of what is mysterious to men is not beneath, but beyond the comprehension of a finite being."

In early life Malabari found his best friends amongst the missionaries, and he almost became a Christian in spirit, though not in form. They got nearer to each other than the nearest of kith and kin, guided by some unknown power to mutual love and esteem.

It was this early friendship with Europeans which made the Parsi poet such a persuasive

apostle of a better understanding between the two races, parted by as vital a difference as age bears to youth. India, old and querulous, exhausted and sensitive, dwelling in the past, which is dead and gone; England, energetic and arrogant with all the youth's contempt for old age.

Malabari with his faith in the ultimate good, felt that God, who has brought the two people together, must unite them in the end. "The veil of the East is a shadow of mutual exclusiveness," he often said. "It is in our power to raise it by right understanding and unfailing sympathy." He expected more from the English than from his own people. He said it is they who have it in their power to shape the future of an ancient race which has for centuries suffered from discord. He held that once the English people set their hearts to this noble work, all misunderstanding would disappear. In the union of the East and the West Malabari foreshadowed the promise of a new era of universal peace. It was not an idle dream. Many men of the two races who have met as comrades and friends have found much to appreciate in each other.

Dr. Wilson introduced Malabari to some of the leading citizens of Bombay, and arranged for the publication of his poems. The verses came out in a neat little volume under the title of "The Niti Vinod: or The Pleasures of the Right Path." The



booklet was a great success. Appreciative letters and reviews poured in from all sides. The Indian and the English press welcomed it as marking a new departure in Gujrati poetry. "Malabari's verses combined," they said, "the sweetness and grace of Gujrati melody with the practical vigour of Western thought." The publication of the book led to many life-long friendships. The one that Malabari prized highly was the friendship of Mr. Mansukhram Tripathi. The strange thing about it was, that this sympathy between the intellectual Brahmin and the spiritual Parsi was brought about by a Christian from Ireland!

It is difficult to render Gujrati verse into English, but some pieces would bear translation. In clear, sad melodies the poet sings of the wailings of child-widows, and the despair of girl-wives pining for life, which is never to be theirs. It is when sung in the tender Indian refrains that the verses touch the heart with the pathos of the life of the East.

"Niti Vinod" brought its author fame and friends, but no material gain. He still laboured as a schoolmaster, giving of his best to the boys entrusted to his care. By a mere coincidence Sir Cowasji Jahangir introduced Malabari to Mr. Martin Wood, the Editor of the "Times of India," and thus our poet found his true vocation. Mr. Martin Wood asked him to write for his paper,

and trained him as a journalist. That was how Malabari discovered the platform from which for many years he was to address Rajahs and Maharajahs, Government and people of India.

## CHAPTER V

### JOURNALISM

**B**OTH by education and temperament Malabari was fitted for the high calling of a journalist, to be the guide and philosopher of modern India. He had come in contact with real life, and traced the disintegrating factors which govern Indian society and remain unaltered and almost unalterable. He was fully in touch with the positive and powerful influences which have been brought into play by the introduction of Western education, and are silently shaping the course of future events. He also saw what others do not see, that the day of fruition was distant and uncertain, and that impatient idealism was fatal to the interests of the country. He was convinced that the only hope of future progress lies in the slow but sure assimilation of the new ideas, requiring unbroken peace, and that the foundations of national life must be laid in the homes of the people. He was not deceived by the first dawn of a renaissance which has dazzled so many honest workers. He firmly believed

that freedom in the homes of people must precede free institutions, and that amid the "unnumbered representatives of obsolete systems" and distractions of rival creeds, it was hopeless to think of self-government on colonial lines, however noble an ideal it may be to work for and to prepare the people for its achievement.

It was social life, he asserted, that needed liberation from the thousand complexities which choke the springs of life, and it was the free play of Western thought enduring for years which could alone remove the rust of ages and strengthen the elements of future improvement. It was something of a faith with him that in the tone and temper of the British Government, with all its limitations, lies the only hope of national regeneration, and that to serve the British Government was therefore to serve the country. He was convinced that the strings that make the loom, the hands that keep it duly adjusted, exercising an invisible and irresistible control, must remain unchanged to keep together the heterogeneous tissue of Indian society, whilst the gates of India were unassailable in the hands of those only who have raised impregnable fortifications all along the frontier against the ancient danger of invasion from without.

All through life, Malabari insisted that we should escape from customs and usages which

made light of human life and were fatal to true progress. "We must live for truth and righteousness," he said, "and sweeten the lives of men and women condemned by custom to everlasting slavery." On the other side he endeavoured to convince the Government that its strength lies in even-handed justice and in the love of the people. Many a time his earnest pleadings modified official opinion and strengthened the policy of sympathy. Nature, in giving him the gift of a golden tongue, ensured his success from the beginning. He was the one man in India credited with the power of unsettling settled facts, and of achieving the impossible.

There is a type of Anglo-Indian, who has a scarcely veiled contempt for educated Indians, and an even less veiled contempt for the time-servers who seek his patronage. He generalizes from the few individuals he knows. He thinks that the policy followed by the supreme Government, in response to the demand made by the educated classes, is not required by the circumstances and the country. He talks of a "strong Government," as if Government derived its strength from the skies. He ought to know that the attitude of the Home Government and opinion in India is becoming every day clear and pronounced. The Government to be strong must have either the support of the people of India or



that of the Home Government, and cannot do without either. The theory of the strong Government is therefore not without difficulties.

The educated Indian, on the other hand, is carried away by "Impatient Idealism," and cannot harmonize his aspirations for Constitutional Government with an administration mainly based on the traditions of Eastern Rule, slowly adapting itself to new conditions. It was Malabari's ambition to reconcile the two main currents of opinion and secure permanent and enduring results.

The training he received under Mr. Martin Wood helped him to conduct his "Indian Spectator" on sound lines. He was sometimes misunderstood by foes and friends alike, but he refused to change its policy, which he thought was the only policy of permanent usefulness. He often wished to give up the struggle and betake himself to the solitude of the jungles. This eternal craving of the East for peace used to come upon him very strongly, but it was met by the Western ideal of unremitting effort, which prevailed and kept him at his post. He realized at twenty-two that active contact with men in the daily transactions of life was a better preparation for salvation than the meditative seclusion to which he was naturally drawn. At times, it is true, he felt as if he could serve his motherland

better by his songs than by his newspaper articles. He longed for the joy which comes to the poet when he catches some beautiful idea from the world of imagination, and pours it out again in spontaneous verse. But he saw that it was his duty to deny himself this satisfaction for the good of the country. "The Indian Spectator" refused to die, surviving storm after storm in its chequered career.

Journalism in India is an exotic. In the olden times there used to be news-writers employed by the Kings to keep them informed of what was going on, but their activities partook somewhat of the nature of a secret service. The first newspaper in India was started by English people, and began by criticizing their own Government and indulged in strong invectives. The Indian newspapers which followed imitated, for the most part, the worst of these English models, and from the very beginning fell into grooves. They therefore missed too often their real mission, which should have been to guide public opinion in the discovery of the causes which shaped the past, and which are now silently governing the course of future events. Malabari wished our Press to have greater inwardness and to devote itself earnestly to domestic problems. We must fight first of all, he used to say, to free ourselves from the tentacles of a priesthood which allows no freedom, if we wish

to raise India and help the onward movement on the lines which have brought such glory to the Western world.

He had great dreams about his own "Spectator." It was to be a poor man's paper; it was to help the women of India; it was to elevate the depressed classes. There were to be systematic studies by experts of social and political problems. Dreams, alas! which were never realized, but he remained on "the watch tower" to the end, the advocate of all good causes, the champion of the helpless and the forlorn.

Nothing succeeded in unsettling the balance of his mind. The gift of complete understanding and boundless sympathy, which was his heritage as a poet, gave him an immense advantage. He could flash deeply into the very core of things, and speak with such gentleness that his opinions were always respected. Malabari remained more a poet than a publicist. He felt even with the man he had to oppose. He always saw the possibility of a standpoint differing from his own, and was content to give his own reasoned opinion. He was very sensitive to criticism himself, and deliberately abstained from doing unto others what he would not have them to do unto him. He would sometimes get up at one o'clock at night to correct a proof, and remove the word which he thought was likely to wound. He offered his own

views without assuming an air of superior wisdom, and even when sorely tempted to speak with severity, he endeavoured to leave the harsh word unspoken. He appealed to the highest in man, knowing that the divine in him makes always for righteousness. This was the secret of his success as an advocate of forlorn causes.

The columns of "The Indian Spectator" testify to the innate benevolence of the editor, no less than to his unerring judgement. "The Indian Spectator," under him, spoke consistently for the people, yet represented no party. He often endeavoured to pour oil on troubled waters, and sometimes a note in "The Indian Spectator" served as a balm to wounded pride, and won the heart of an opponent.

He was sometimes misunderstood both by officials and by his own people. The officials, convinced of their omniscience, laughed at his fears, refused to take note of changing conditions, and lightly dismissed his appeal for a definite policy. His own contemporaries thought he was merely temporizing by counselling them patience and moderation, urging them to consider the ultimate results of the unmeasured use of words which were likely to alienate popular sympathy from the Government.

Malabari strongly urged on the Government the need for reform—more so through private

correspondence than through the columns of his paper—but he recognized that the salvation of India rested mainly with the Indians themselves. He gave his support to the Government, not because it was perfect, but because he was sure it was infinitely more human than any that had gone before it. He often said that no one with any vision of the future could afford to weaken the Government.

If he wished he could have been the most popular man of his time; the hero and idol of his generation. But he resisted the temptation, standing apart and in the background, and was only to mould and guide opinion in silence without reward or recognition; and striving in full faith to secure the greatest good of the greatest number. As an eminent English publicist put it, “Malabari leads through the leaders.” He should perhaps have said “tries to lead,” for often the leaders would not be led by him.

It is a strange phenomenon of our politics that while our people are eager to have self-Government on colonial lines, which has been declared to be the aim of both the Indian National Congress and the Muhammedan League, the Hindus at least still cling to the old carcase of a system which has failed irretrievably, and plead its petty utilities, ignoring the lasting injury it has done to the growth of national sentiment. What is more,



they look backward in trying to realize the future, nursing a false pride in the past which has cradled the inglorious present, and buried public life under an accumulation of sectarian jealousies and mutual distrust. The "Back to the Vedas" cry still holds its ground. The Muhammedans, on the other hand, press for preferential treatment, and aspire to self-government in the same breath.

Malabari saw far into the future, and was not deceived by fine phrases which have such a fatal fascination for the majority of our countrymen. It was not in politics, but in a reconstructed society, on the basis of a free and equal life for all classes and both sexes that he saw the hope of the future. The argument that Indian Society has managed to exist through all changes which have changed other nations, and must, therefore, be on the right lines, never appealed to him. He could not understand how educated men could uphold a system of inequality between the sexes and the tyranny of the higher over the lower castes, leading to such a degeneration of the masses, that even a hundred years of British Rule have failed to produce any substantial improvement.

He held that if we are earnest about the future of our country we must seek new ways of life, which have led other nations to greatness and glory.

Malabari believed that it was faith that was

wanting to realize the potentialities of a national life which the future offered. He would have us recognize that life went out of the old organization centuries ago, leaving half truths and deadening superstitions behind. He pleaded ceaselessly that we should destroy false pride, and with it all the pernicious forces which have their root in ignorance, and that our men of light and leading, who now neglect the vital interests of the country for what passes for high politics should take up in their hundreds the gospel of social freedom, broad based on the co-operation of all right-minded men and women.

## CHAPTER VI

### “THE INDIAN SPECTATOR”

**A**N Indian journalist is very often his own manager, contributor, and proof reader. Malabari went even further, and sometimes hired a cab, and delivered his paper from door to door.

The Editorial chair demands rare qualities of heart and brain, “a calm and clear judgement, a wide range and a keen perception of human motives in the handling of large questions.” Malabari was perhaps the only Indian journalist who saw above and beyond the horizon, and refused to support conventional prejudice, or blow attractive bubbles to please the popular fancy. The career of “The Indian Spectator,” therefore, resulted rather in a *succès d'estime* than in a record of big circulation. It enjoyed, however, great power and influence; its paragraphs were read with great interest, both by Indians and Anglo-Indians.

“It is a paper like ‘Tit Bits’ that gathers in the shekels,” remarked Sir George Newnes. “The papers that make and unmake Cabinets, form

opinions, raise great questions, exercise great power, are financial failures." And it is to the latter class that the "Spectator" belonged. It swallowed up a large share of what Malabari earned by working for those who sought his assistance in other spheres.

We generally read a newspaper which flatters our vanity, and reflects our own views with all the dexterity of professional journalism. The "Spectator" was honest above all things. It fearlessly expressed its own opinions, and appealed only to a select number of paying subscribers. It was, however, widely read, a single copy passing from hand to hand amongst hundreds of readers.

Many a time when other journals expressed their strong support, or equally strong disapprobation of a public measure, Malabari's weekly came upon the scene, opening out new aspects of the problem, and suggesting easier and more humane methods of meeting the situation. And all this with such sweet reasonableness and confidence in the good intentions of the men in authority, that it was found difficult to ignore his views. The result was that the Government often consulted the Editor beforehand on important questions of administration or policy. He enjoyed the friendship of almost all Viceroys and Governors from the days of Lord Northbrook.

He often said that it was impossible for any

one to speak for the whole of India with precision, except on the few large questions which affected all the provinces in an equal manner and to an equal degree. He was, therefore, never dogmatic, but when once he was convinced of the justice of his cause, he put his case in such a manner that it was impossible to resist his views. He always appealed to high principles, to the love of truth, humanity and fair play. Who could be such a churl as wantonly to disregard what Malabari clearly showed was the only right and just way of dealing with a question?

Malabari had great dreams about the Indian Press. It has, he said, a wide scope both for good and evil, and grave responsibilities. It was only a pure administration, free from corruption, and determined to do justice all round that could afford to welcome the co-operation of a vigilant Press in the cause of good administration. He deeply deplored the low level to which the Press in all countries was sinking, courting moral bankruptcy in its thirst for gold and popularity. He was particularly anxious that the Indian Press should take a broader view of men and measures.

The Government of India, in Malabari's opinion, was overshadowed by the traditions of the personal rule it had supplanted. It was not constitutional like that of England and other European countries. The public, therefore, needed calm and clear guid-



ance, and was unfortunately acquiring a taste for strong and pungent writing. The Anglo-Indian papers, with a single exception, often committed themselves to party views, and fired their missiles impartially at the "educated native," and the "seditious Babu." They had no imperial policy, and did not try to lead their youthful contemporaries into more fruitful channels. They missed the great opportunities of initiating a real and fruitful imperial policy.

He used to tell me that it was his ambition to have a good "daily," and conduct it on sound lines, with a constructive policy of permanent value. It was not a Press Act, he used to argue, but a good Press with an Imperial Policy, which could influence opinion in such a way as to put a stop to the continuous flow of misrepresentations and bitterness.

The British administration cannot help being British in its character, he often said. It was not possible for it to follow traditions which were not its own. It was the importing of the British ideals into the Indian administration which had made it such a glorious success, and he certainly expected Englishmen to follow their own traditions, and be independent, and straightforward, disdaining temporary expedients which are the refuge of the destitute. He believed that the more English the administration becomes in its character the more

British will India grow, and by a happy blending of the two, the union will become almost indissoluble.

He was anxious to provide a medium for friendly interchange of opinions between Indians and Anglo-Indians, and though he could not manage to carry out his idea of having a “daily,” he started “East and West” in 1902, with the avowed object of bringing the East and the West together. The Magazine began its career with the approbation and active co-operation of some of the most distinguished men of the two countries. The Duke of Argyll and Sir Charles Dilke on one side, and the Gaekwar of Baroda and the Maharajahs of Gwalior and of Bikanir on the other, contributed to its pages.

The magazine has served a useful purpose, but it has hardly attained the object of its founder. Recent discussions have been largely on philosophical subjects, which are, by their very nature, above party politics, and are well calculated to show unity of thought in East and West. The time has, however, arrived, when a friendly discussion of current questions in a spirit of amity, both by officials and non-officials, is desirable, and it is to be hoped that the Magazine will be used more and more, both by officials and non-officials for fostering a healthy public opinion for the Empire. “East and West” has even now great possibilities of useful work.

It will perhaps surprise my readers, that Malabari, in spite of his general support of the principles and policy of the Government, did not escape suspicion. In 1898 he published a series of Gujarati poems under the title of "Sansarika." The book was pronounced by the Director of Public Instruction as seditious, and his printing office was visited by the police. The matter was hotly discussed for months, the Government of Bombay exonerated the poet from all ill-will towards itself, Lords Northbrook, Ripon, and Reay in the House of Lords, testified to Mr. Malabari's steadfast loyalty. He himself did not care to make much of this unpleasant incident, and wrote to a powerful friend: "Now since the local authorities do not like to refer the matter to unbiassed non-official scrutiny, I am myself in no hurry to trouble the Government of India or the Secretary of State. As it is, I almost feel too much has been made of what looks like a personal matter. And after all, what is likely to humiliate my Government must necessarily humiliate me." The matter was finally allowed to drop, but when such a friend of England could not escape suspicion, what of ordinary men whose actions and utterances are often liable to systematic misrepresentation? Our police have not yet understood their functions, or realized their responsibilities. In "Samsarika" Malabari had merely preached his gospel of social reform. He

exhorted his people to be up and doing, and his words were misinterpreted to mean what he never meant them to convey. He, however, continued his labours in the cause of suffering women with a loyalty, energy, and sagacity, that extorted the admiration of his opponents. He was often accused by Hindu critics of aiming at upsetting the entire fabric of society. “Reformers are always open to the taunt,” Lord Morley observes, “that they find nothing in the world good enough for them.” “You write,” said a popular novelist to one of this unthanked tribe, “as if you believed everything is bad.” “But I do believe that everything might be better,” said the other. The reply was convincing, but it has taken many years even for the Europeans to accept change as a necessity of progress. In India the spirit of reform is regarded with great distrust. Hindus, Parsis, and Muhammedans alike are apprehensive of the mischievous effects of reform, and ready to pronounce all reformers heretics. It was the triumph of his personal character that in spite of much misrepresentation and calumny, Malabari retained the esteem of his political and social adversaries, who often sought his advice and assistance.

In referring to the files for details of the battles which the “Spectator” has fought against ignorance, prejudice, or high-handedness, we are confronted with yet another misfortune that dogs the

steps of Indian journalism—the depredations of the white ant and, hardly less disastrous, the flattering attentions of the reader who borrows but never returns. In any case it is beyond the scope of my wandering sketch to draw largely upon such material as may still be available.

The “Spectator” fought its way up to power and influence under Malabari, who continued the good fight right to the end against all that shuts out sweetness and light from life. He sympathized with the aspirations of the younger generation, who take lightly the labours of their seniors as their rightful inheritance, and, in turn, demand a great deal more than the former asked for. It has been truly said that when “one spring of discontent mounts to a head and overflows every other source becomes a tributary.” The last few years have witnessed great changes in the tone and temper of young India. It was Malabari’s endeavour now to explain the position of the Government to his countrymen and show that there were many sides of the question which escaped them. There was, however, no shrinking from the criticism of official mistakes or from remonstrance with panic or high-handedness. He frankly confessed he did not expect a new India to rise out of nothing, merely owing to the importation of Western institutions. “If it were merely a matter of appointing Committees or passing resolutions



or debating in the newspapers we should no doubt succeed grandly,” he said, “in making India one of the foremost countries of the world. But the future has to be worked out day and night, amid solitary villages and among ignorant men and women, at home and in silence, and for this simple task we are, alas, unspeakably poor.” He spoke out his mind freely and frankly, and it cost him ease, many sacrifices, and finally his health and life. But he would not be silent; and though the misunderstanding and odium he incurred stung him acutely, nothing could rob him of his sweetness of spirit.

It was impossible for him, however, to run the paper single-handed. In recent years he had to surrender the helm to other capable hands. But wherever he happened to be, and even when engrossed with other things, he continued to contribute short paragraphs as a religious duty, and occasionally he would snatch time to write at some length when he thought the occasion demanded his reasoned opinion. The great vogue which theosophy and occultism obtained in India a few years ago, prompted him to write his own reminiscence of Madame Blavatsky, which I transcribe in full, as it shows how Malabari touched the sore point without causing pain, and also his tolerance, charity, and good humour.

“The first time I heard this mellifluous and classical expression ‘Fatuous Flap-Doodle,’ was

from Madame Blavatsky's lips. 'H.P.B.,' high priestess of Occultism, author of 'Isis Unveiled,' and custodian of the combined wisdom of East and West, had recently installed herself in a by-lane of Girgaum Back Road, and had drawn to her many Hindu and a few Parsi Chelas. Among these were personal friends, who pressed me to join, opening out vistas of vast usefulness and a high status in society. But I pleaded inability to follow the drift of transcendentalism, though generally sympathizing with theosophy as a scheme of eclecticism. When Blavatsky and Olcott were attacked by some of our Orthodox Parsi Papers, I asked for tolerant and patient hearing. This made the founders of the Theosophic cult seek me, and thus we came to be friends. I read the literature they gave me, and enjoyed Olcott's droll Yankee humour, no less than 'H.P.B.'s' immense learning. They favoured me with quiet talks in the evening, and tried to capture me as a regular *Chela*. Failing therein, they attacked me in the only vulnerable point in my armour, my love of the little 'Spectator.' Madame especially lauded its paragraphs to the skies, and offered to contribute. I accepted the offer gratefully, but on condition that I was free to use her writings or not to use them. We thus became very chummy, though I never attended the séances nor shared the privileges of the elect.

"Madame Blavatsky was a mighty personality, large of limb, loud of voice, reckless in manner, with profound, if somewhat ill-digested knowledge, and with a pair of eyes blazing like electric batteries. She was short-tempered, but I learnt to manage her like a child as we sat in her sanctum, she smoking and talking and scolding and swearing, and I listening and usually laughing. One afternoon she wanted to take me by storm and came out with a particularly learned yarn about the ancient cult of the Magi, the fire burning eternally at Baku, her personal first-hand experience of the great ones in those regions and elsewhere. In her enthusiasm Madame talked and talked till I felt sore under the astral rides she gave me, scouring the heaven above and earth below for the nuggets of the Zoroastrian wisdom, and promising me wondrous powers of illumination, if I could only accept divine guidance unquestioningly. She took me by turn at my weakest and my strongest, and lay back in her chair apparently exhausted by the strain of her own emotions. Was I captured? Alas, no. On the contrary, taking a malicious pleasure in mimicking her, I gave Madame a yarn about my own spiritualistic experiences, winding up with the exploits of a cock that had belonged to my great-grandfather. 'That cock,' I concluded in an awed whisper, 'used to pray in the Bactrian dialect, and it is believed that

its feathery frame was inhabited by the soul of a Magian.' As I doled out the linguistic and magic virtues of that wonderful chanticleer, I thought I had made an impression on Madame. But she was contemplating murder all the while. Before I could realize her intention, she jumped out of her chair, and with the words 'Take this, you wretch,' she delivered a ringing box on my ear. Rubbing the injured orifice with one hand, I saluted the tigress with the other. 'Let me kiss the hand that had smitten the sceptic, now is Isis truly unveiled.' We both laughed at that—the situation was ludicrous in the extreme. Had I not luckily laughed, Madame would have cried tears of shame, she was so sensitive in spite of her strength. As it was she never again talked to me of the occult and the invisible. Never more for me the wisdom of the East imparted in weird jaw-breaking words, the extolling of our ancestral virtues, the calling back to the glorious days when man communed visibly and tangibly with his Maker, through agencies which the vulgar West could hardly ever conceive. But the loss was nominal whilst the gain was real. In a moment of expansion, inevitable under the action, she was thrown off her guard for the moment, and confessed to her contempt of the 'Fatuus Flap-doodle' which Indians, as a rule, love to take in from foreigners. After this we understood each other thoroughly, and we did

not meet often. I stood by ‘H.P.B.’ to the last. Even when the cup and saucer crash came at Simla, shattering the faith of ever loyal Mr. Allen Hume, I tried to belittle the consequences. Madame should not be judged by the ordinary standards. A giant in intellect, she could be at times even worse than a child, presuming to treat mankind as a collection of imbeciles and babes. She was a creature of strange impulses, and her love of sensation drove her to the performance of a “miracle” which the catch-penny street juggler would be ashamed to practise. But all the same Madame Blavatsky was one of the most remarkable women of her age. It irks a generous mind to see the eagle hooted by an owlet. But that is the way of the world. With Olcott I was in greater sympathy; he knew how to efface himself, how to laugh at himself. He felt intensely for the poor and the despised, and did his best to uplift them. And he never thrust his spiritualistic attentions on me, having seen that I was a bad subject.

“But whether it comes from a Blavatsky or an Olcott, or anybody else, one must be careful not to succumb to ‘Fatuuous Flap-doodle.’ When a foreigner tells an Indian that he loves India more than the Indian loves her, or that he loves India more than he loves his own country, it is ten to one a case of softening of the brain, or worse still



some moral obliquity. Our Indian ancestors were decent enough persons in their way, and acted decently enough according to their own dim light. But it sickens one to hear perpetually of their glorious deeds, the more so when the foreign mentor talks in the same breath of his own forebears as naked savages destitute of all merit. That is 'Fatuous Flap-doodle,' and one must always be on guard against it. Personally I had rather my European friend slapped me in the face for my faults, which are many and serious, than that he should feed me on this cheap pabulum, conjuring up pictures of national greatness that offend violently my common sense. He may be sincere, but he does me great harm nevertheless. Patriotism, like other virtues, should be healthy, not morbid. As the Persian saying goes, a wise foe-man is more serviceable to one than a foolish friend. And no foolish friend does more harm than he who treats us habitually to 'Fatuous Flap-doodle' coddling our 'beautiful' social customs and our 'noble' moral deeds, discerning wisdom in rank and patent folly, beauty in loathsome ugliness. It is not friendship, but fatuity that usually dictates this line of conduct towards one's fellow-beings. No race can claim a monopoly of wisdom and virtue, least of all a race that lives in the past, trifles with the present, and throws away the future."

How differently did he write of those who loved India and her people without flattery and trickery. I was with Malabari when the news arrived of Lord Ripon's death. For a long time he remained in silent prayer, and then with tears in his eyes he wrote the obituary notice for his paper, which I was privileged to read in manuscript.

“Ripon the righteous!” he wrote. “This was the title which the people of India gave the deceased Viceroy as they said good-bye to him nearly twenty-five years ago, after a series of more than royal ovations. What was the secret of Lord Ripon's popularity? He certainly lacked Lord Dufferin's grit as he lacked the brilliancy and vigour of Lord Curzon. Nor did he do anything so very extraordinary as to merit the overflowing affection and undying devotion of a traditionally sluggish populace. His work in connection with local self-government and education, though memorable in its results, was, after all, an expansion of the policy inaugurated by Lord Mayo. Whence then Lord Ripon's phenomenal popularity? It arose, I believe, in response to his own unfeigned love of the people, his desire to broaden the basis of their civic liberty, and above all, his treatment of them as brothers and fellow-citizens. In this respect he stands above, and apart from almost all his predecessors as well as successors. This, to my mind, is the secret of his popularity, joined to

his transparent honesty of character and purpose, his straightforwardness of speech and his downright English methods of work.

“A hundred interesting reminiscences of our personal relations spring up as I sit down to this hurried scribble at a distance. But there is time only for one; the memory of our last interview at Bombay clings to me still as a sacred vesture of the soul. He had missed me at every public entertainment in his honour, and at last asked Sir Jamsetjee, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji and Mr. Badruddin Tyabji severally to tell me, that if I did not go up to him quietly some morning, he would have to come over to me—he could not leave India without saying good-bye in person, and he had offered Mr. Dadabhai (Naoroji) a special inducement if he succeeded in abducting me to Government House. So I had to go, and very grateful I was to have done so. After more than one hour’s talk I commended Mr. Dadabhai to his care as a prospective candidate for parliamentary honours, and Lord Ripon promised heartily to do all he could to forward our enterprise—a notable proof of his brotherly interest in Indians. Then, as we stood up for the last handshake, and as he kept my hand a prisoner in both of his, trying perhaps to read my thoughts, I could only jerk out, ‘Don’t forget India.’ To this he replied with a heaving breast and eyes glistening

with moisture, ‘How can I forget India? It has become part of my existence.’ No wonder the so-called stolid East loved and trusted this true lover of her children.

“In my last visit to London we had a long talk and his advice was to give Mr. Morley the full credit of his intentions. ‘If he cannot help India, no other can in the circumstances.’ We were considering the South African difficulty and the new situation in Bengal. And here we parted for the last time (he punctuated every parting with a ‘God bless you’), he to hobble down to the House of Lords as Leader and Privy Seal, I to look up Lord Courtney a few doors away.

“Lord Ripon wrote to me more than once, but evidently it cost him an effort to write. His last two letters were dictated. In the first of these he asked me pathetically to explain to the Indian public why he could not attend the debates on the Reform Bill, and his signature was ominously unlike the bold clear-cut expression of his own character. Next week came a countermand saying he had managed to attend the debate and advising my countrymen to make the best of what Lord Morley could secure. Almost with his last breath did he serve the country which he loved next only to his own. A stout heart and a noble one—a heart of oak which no opposition could break. Of

him history with truth can record, 'Well done, servant of God.'

"Lord Ripon was scarcely a great statesman, and he would have shuddered at the bare suggestion of genius as prompting any of the most important measures of his Viceroyalty. But on more occasions than one did he approve himself a good man and a true seeker after righteousness. An attempt is being made in some quarters to stir up the dying embers of the Ilbert Bill controversy. Anglo-Indians have nothing to be proud of in that connection, except in so far as they unwittingly taught their fellow-subjects the art of political agitation and organization, Surely it does not lie in their mouths to protest against Indian methods of agitation which are more or less echoes of their own methods. Political agitation in India has come to stay, call it sedition, Swadeshi or what you will. And so far as this agitation stops short of actual crime, it will claim the sympathy of every freeborn Englishman. Is not the Indian justified in claiming equal opportunities with other British citizens over the Empire, of which India is an integral portion? To use her as maid-of-all-work for the Empire, and then to deny her the elementary right of citizenship, is a proposition as infamous on its moral side as it is inapplicable in practice. For practical purposes India is more important to Great Britain than any other of her



possessions across the sea. This was Lord Ripon's view of the matter (the words are my own) although whilst in office he could not enforce them openly.”

## CHAPTER VII

### MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

“**M**ARRIAGE,” says Auguste Comte, “joins two beings to the mutual perfecting and service of each other by a bond which no shadow of rivalry can darken; its essential purpose is to bring to completeness the education of the heart. Attachment in which it begins leads on to a spirit of reverence, and that to the practice of goodness, each spouse is in turn protector and protected—the one being richer in affection, the other in force. When two beings, so complex and yet so different as man and woman, are united together, the whole life is barely long enough to know each other fully, and to love each other perfectly.” The ideal of marriage set forth by the Positivist philosopher, is clothed in more than the sacredness of an awful mystery by Eastern religion.

It is regarded as an eternal tie, which goes towards the perfecting of man and woman. Among the Parsis marriage is a religious duty. The position of woman in ancient Persia, at one time, seems to have been as good as that accorded to

her in our day in civilized countries. Woman, as a mother, was always held in respect. She was the mistress of the house, and aspired to moral and spiritual perfection by lifelong devotion to her husband and her children. Each time the Avesta speaks of pious men, it does not omit to speak of pious women. It promises paradise to both.

According to Zoroaster human beings are created to keep up the incessant struggle against evil. Therefore, to ensure the triumph of good over evil, it is necessary that Zoroastrians should increase and multiply. The mother of many children was honoured amongst the Parsis. The birth of a girl was as welcome as that of a boy. "Kanya," the name by which modern Parsis, like Hindus, call a young girl, is full of very tender associations.

A Persian girl was brought up in an atmosphere well calculated to awaken the spirit of self-sacrifice, purity, and ungrudging service. She was educated, as a rule, by her own mother, in the paths of devotion and benevolence. Up to the seventh year she received no literary education, but later she was taught to read religious and devotional books. She was brought up to be chaste in thought, gentle in manners, devoted to her parents, faithful, tender, and obedient to her husband.

Religious and moral education was considered to be of more importance than lessons in grammar and geography, which now absorb so much attention. When she attained the age of puberty, her parents arranged her marriage with a young man of about the same age and of good antecedents. The parents examined carefully the genealogy of the boy's house. It was essential that he should be of pure blood on both sides, and belong to a family of good repute.

Modern Parsis, living amid a Hindu population, slowly adopted the Hindu customs, such as child marriage, which is mainly responsible for the degeneration of a virile race. The field of selection, too, was limited in India and the marriage ceremony likewise came to be essentially Hindu. Marriage alliances began to depend more and more on the opinion of the astrologer, generally an ignorant Brahmin, who compared the horoscopes and could be bought over for a few rupees. Boys and girls were sometimes united in marriage long before they were out of their teens, with a complete disregard of their own future and of the effect on the coming generations.

Happily all this has changed now. The ceremony is more or less the same, but it is shorn of all extravagance, and marriages have become a matter of choice and convenience. Bride and bridegroom, with their friends, meet in the house

reserved for the wedding, the men dressed in the pure white Jama of ancient Iran and the ladies in beautiful clinging Saris, draped with all the romantic art of the East, and displaying all the colours of the rainbow. Flowers and betel are given to guests, and rose-water from gold and silver *Gulab-pashis* is sprinkled on their dresses. The priest, too, has often to cut short his benedictions to suit the anglicized notions of his clients. The mixture of the East and the West, almost in everything, gives the ceremony quite a new character, a dim foreshadowing of what the West may yet do to alter the changeless East.

In the early eighties Parsi Society was still in a state of transition. The education of girls had just begun. The wishes of the parties were sometimes consulted, but generally the marriages were arranged by parents, accompanied by all the old world pomp and circumstance.

Malabari met his fate in the house of his own landlady. He was twenty-one at the time, absorbed in study, and a dweller in dreamland. The future Mrs. Malabari was just nineteen. She had received little of Western education, but had imbibed those noble qualities which are the heritage of her race—to be a good wife, a loving mother, and a devoted friend. What mattered it to the husband if she could not speak English? She could appreciate his Gujrati verses all the better. He



did not mind her ignorance of all that we associate with Western culture as long as her presence meant some subtle magnetism, gentle and serene, which attracted him in spite of himself. She loved him with all the devotion of her soul, and it was this love that conquered him once and for ever.

He felt that in a simple home, which was all that he desired for himself, a community of interest in the thousand and one small things which make up the dual existence of the day, was more important than intellectual equality.

What one seeks in marriage is a nature which supplements his own, a twin spirit throbbing with the same aspirations and prepared to share the same trials in life. A marriage inspired by an inner motive of selfishness, seeking nothing but pleasure and self-gratification in conventional union, is at the most a commercial compact leading often to inevitable ruin of body and soul.

Marriage becomes divine when each party resolves to live from that day not for self, but for the other who becomes the very heart and soul of life. Such heart unions are rare both in India and England. They are only possible in a community of God-fearing men and women, who have freedom of choice, and equal opportunities of knowing each other. In some cases chance, and what we in India call the law of Karma, bring two persons together for their mutual happiness, and there is

some truth in what Zulaikha said, "Love does not spring only from the sight of the beloved, but sometimes whispered words give rise to the wealth of love"; and then again there is happiness.

What love is possible between couples who have nothing in common and suddenly find themselves united in wedlock? The parents of the intended couple cripple themselves financially for life in marrying their offspring, and yet the married couple may find that all the expenditure has brought them sorrow, and sealed the fate of the woman for life. It is true that marriages of choice are not always happy, but is it right to conclude that because people are often misguided in their choice and barter their souls for pleasure or position, we should not have the option of choosing? In olden days, when people knew no better, and men and women were on the same level, perhaps things worked out decently. Now that the outlook of the educated classes has changed, is it right to unite in marriage at random two awakened minds thirsting for happiness? It may be possible for two sleeping souls to jog along silently through their earthly pilgrimage, but when the minds are awakened, when the hearts thirst for self-realization, it is a sin to tie down for life two thinking, thirsting human beings who know next to nothing of each other. What sin, what sorrow, what utter ruin of life have been the result of these ill-

assorted unions? It is such marriages that have led in India to the degeneration of the whole race. The man can marry again and please himself in other ways, but not the woman. She must for ever endure a loveless existence. How can she be the mother of good and brave men, or inspire her children with ideals that make men gods when the heart within has been frozen to ice? The suffering of the Indian woman is so patient, her future happiness so uncertain, that the parents do not even hide their grief at the misfortune of her being born. They would rather their infant daughter died than that she should live a life in which all the chances for her are of sorrow rather than of happiness.

She may have conquered the indifference of her parents by her sweet ways, she may have been tenderly brought up, but it is all in vain. Her future happiness is always staked on a mere chance. If the husband turns out good and considerate, she has a home; if he becomes indifferent, she must endure, to the end, the solitude of the soul, which is worse than death.

Malabari was more fortunate than many of his contemporaries; he could make his own choice, and he married at years of discretion. He had an utter disregard of outward veneer and little regard for mere social position. In his wife he wanted a companion to share with him the burdens of his life;

and he thought that his bride elect was prepared to share them. He, therefore, arranged the marriage, and the wedding ceremony was quiet and simple; the priest asked the usual question, "Pasand Kardi," and gave his "Ashirbad" (benediction) and the couple drove straight to their little home. The husband resumed his literary work, as if no change had taken place in his life, while the wife ministered to his comfort, inspired by increasing respect for his genius. Otherwise, she led her own simple life in her own simple manner, and he proved himself an ideal husband and a loving father.

It seems that the gift of genius brings with it a keen sense of joy and sorrow and an eternal longing for the unattainable. No reality can approximate to the poet's ideal of perfection, and there is really no satisfaction for him on this earth. A sudden eye-flash, a soft gesture, may touch his heart, and he may feel for a moment as if he were nearer to the heart's desire, to find it after all only a partial realization of his dream; and then again the same craving, the same heartache, the same longing, which he pours out in passionate verse or prose. The poet has to pay the penalty of his high gifts in that nothing can come up to his dreams; and Malabari was a poet even when he could not read and write.

The veil of the East is the shadow cast by the Eastern married life, the smoke rising from

smouldering hearts condemned to disillusionment and despair. The Indian mind foiled by circumstances from the realization of its desires, turns inwards and finds its most joyous mood in a life beyond the everyday reality. The world of imagination thus becomes the more real, and offers the only possible retreat from the hopelessness of actual life. It is difficult for those who have not come in direct touch with the pathetic domestic life of the country to understand its meaning and realize the strength of its unfulfilled desire.

Malabari's philosophic temperament, a rare gift for a poet, helped him to look hopefully forward and beyond his own self. Wife and husband both bore the burden of life silently with mutual trust and esteem. They were blessed with three daughters and two sons, and as he proudly used to say, "no other parents could have had such children."

The family led a simple life at Bandora, caring little for the outer world and its frivolities, standing almost apart from the new life which has taken hold of the younger generation. Parsi Society is rapidly moving towards the modern life of unbelief and excitement and the mad pursuit of wealth and pleasure. Few care for such time-worn virtues as brotherly love and communal sympathy, which were characteristics of the generation that is now disappearing.



The one great loss that darkened Malabari's home was the death of his eldest daughter. She was the virtual head of the family; its guardian angel. They called her "our little mother." She was married after a prolonged engagement, and passed away after only twelve months of wedded life, leaving her little baby of three weeks as the pledge of her love. She had a singularly affectionate nature, and made the pain of others her own. She seemed always to have lived nearer heaven than earth.

She was mourned deeply and widely, but to all messages of sympathy that poured in, the father had only one answer to make: "He who gave has the right to take away." The Governor of the Presidency, who had attended the wedding, could not help exclaiming in the course of a long letter, "How I admire your wonderful fortitude."

Malabari left two sons and two daughters. Phiroze Malabari, the elder, is a barrister. He has travelled through Europe, parts of China and Japan, and has inherited his father's love of literary work. His book, "Bombay in the Making," which was recently published with an introduction by H. E. Sir George Clarke (now Lord Sydenham) has won a place for itself. Like a devoted son, he shared with his father the burden of his evergrowing occupations, and now he has to bear them alone. Jahangir, the younger son,

has gone into business. He is quiet and unassuming, and is in sole charge of the finances of the family. Miss Phiroza Malabari has qualified in England as a doctor and specialized in eye diseases. The eyes of our Parsi sisters seem indeed to be growing preternaturally weak. Little Daulat, the third daughter, is still at school, but already wears glasses which her sister has prescribed. Their home is on the brow of Bandora Hill, with the sea moaning below. It is a simple, two-storied house, which many a pilgrim has visited to meet the sage of Bandora and enjoy his generous hospitality.

## CHAPTER VIII

### TRAVELS

THOSE who met Malabari in his home at Bandora and saw him going to his office in Bombay every afternoon, like a soldier going on to the field, walking or driving straight to his room, as if seeking shelter from the life that ebbed and flowed around him, could hardly realize that he had spent many years in Bombay, and that his four-storied house in Hornby Row had already become almost historic. He never condemned city life in itself, but saw the hand of the Maker in allowing great cities to grow up for some purpose hidden from human eye. He often said that cities were, like manured fields, fostering to full growth the tares as well as the wheat of human nature. He was not prepared to accept the doctrine of Tolstoi that city life in itself is wrong. He admitted that it was usually a life of greed and ambition, but he held that not only the wealth of the nations increases as man draws more and more on the forces of nature and makes them subservient to his needs, but that the quickened

life of modern times has accelerated immeasurably the evolution of the human race.

Malabari had a horror of crowds, but he saw that things were working towards a better social understanding through the fire and impulse of invisible and potent forces. He had resolved to consecrate all his energies to the service of his country, and was determined to remain at his post. He and his friend Diwan Dayaram Giddumal endeavoured to follow the teachings of the Gita, and lived to serve only.

It is men who make nations, and alas, in olden times, the wisest and the best of Indians sought refuge in inaction. They thought they were offering themselves in sacrifice, whilst they were in reality obeying the impulse of an insidious form of selfishness. They wasted their lives in vain pursuits, and allowed their country to be ruined by lesser men, depriving it of the wise guidance and control that it needed. The rakes and gamblers became the rulers, and sealed the degradation and death of India. If our great men had followed their Dharma as defined in the Gita, India to-day would have been in full realization of her dreams and mistress of her own destiny.

On these grounds Malabari always urged that we must all do our share of work in this work-a-day world, and make civic life really fruitful. He himself gave up his favourite pursuits, literature,

art and poetry, to take up his full share of the country's burden. It is doubtful, however, whether the temporary relief, the evanescent influence on everyday problems of life, can be as enduring as the soul-consuming labour of a mind bent on eternal verities. Who can venture to appraise the thought-imprisoned power of a written page? It was a great renunciation, but Malabari was always ready to put his own shoulder to the wheel. He did not believe in neglecting little things in the hope of doing great things. He believed in doing his share of work, and leaving the rest to God. India, he thought, needs all the patience and skill which the country can command to rehabilitate national life, and to lay out a course set straight to the appointed goal. How could he leave the helm at the mercy of dazed mariners in order to follow for his own pleasure the remote course of the stars?

Malabari was, therefore, always doing something, always travelling, and when he was not on his travels, he used to walk incessantly. It seemed as if his body must be in motion to keep pace with the activity of his mind.

It was in the course of his earlier wanderings that Malabari came in touch with the slow beating heart of the country, condemned for ages to a life of stagnation. He has given some charming descriptions of his travels in the "Indian Spectator."



In one place he writes : " Musafirkhana was a few yards from the Dharmshala, and the Khansama an old man. I have never known a young Khansama in these parts. The explanation is that when a Sahib cannot afford to pension off his old butler he provides a place for him in this manner. The Khansama had a large family of children and grandchildren, all ready to serve, but he kept a very spare table, only curry and rice for breakfast—the town being so far away. Had to make shift on milk. About 2 p.m., came in the Khansama's little granddaughter, with broom and duster. She moved sofas and lifted chairs with an agility that would horrify Bombay girls twice her age. 'What is your name, child?' 'Pyari' (Darling). 'What a name! Whose darling are you?' 'Aji Sahib, I am God's darling, my mother's darling, my father's darling. Whose else could I be?' Not bad for a girl who has never attended the Alexandra School."

"I am now and then asked," he writes, "by European friends, how often I have been to England, and how long I have stayed there altogether, and when I protest that I have never been out of India my friends look at me with blank astonishment. The fact is, I have my own ideas of travel, as more or less of everything else. The first tour I remember having made, was round grandmother's kitchen. Thence I trans-

ferred my attention to the front yard of the house, thence to the street, the neighbouring streets, the whole suburb of Nanpura, and the surrounding suburbs of Rustompura, Salabatpura, Gopalpura and many others; next, the camp and villages beyond Umra and Dumaz, and so on. The climbing of trees and roofs in search of paper-kites was another round of useful tours. My last long tour from Surat was a walking match to Novsari, where poor Mr. Rustomjee gave his savoury and succulent Malida feasts. From Surat and its districts I have passed on to Gujrat generally, and from Gujrat, of course, to Khathiawar and Cutch. I have seen much of India during the last seven years, but Gujrat and Khathiawar I know best. Most of these two provinces I have done on foot, and with my eyes open. I know so much about them that if I were to sell my knowledge at retail prices, so much a page, I think I could make an honest penny out of it, and I tell you again, my dear respectable Bombay reader, that much of my experience is the result of good hard tramping.

“But whether I go to Europe or not I will never give up my habit. Your globe trotter would laugh at my antiquated method, but he cannot deny its advantages. When you travel or study by slow and deliberate stages, every fresh step or item of knowledge is a keen enjoyment. What is the use of visiting foreign countries when you

know nothing of your own? When you go to Europe, ignorant of your own national life, you will miss the thousand points of comparison and contrast, the thousand shades of difference, the thousand beauties and blemishes which European civilization presents. At the best you look at things, not see or see through them. Knowledge is best acquired, take my word for it, by the comparative method. You go to see Windsor Castle, and are lost in admiration at the sight. Have you seen Agra? It makes me sick to hear a man rave about this thing or that ten thousand miles away, when a much better, perhaps the original thing, is lying unnoticed in his own land."

No other Indian journalist travelled so much, lived with the people so much as Malabari. This gave him his strength and his insight. He did not construct an imaginary India, like some of his distinguished contemporaries. He knew his country too well. What did the toiling millions know or care for constitutional reforms? Is it possible to rehabilitate national existence without their willing support? These are the questions which demand an answer, and he was prepared to wait and work. He did not believe in sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind. Consequently he was often regarded by his contemporaries as a renegade. They forgot that he was labouring for lasting results.

He had finished his Indian travels by 1890, and seen almost all that there was to see in India of city, town, and village life. He was as much at home in the Punjab as in Bengal or Bombay. The Indian eye was being gradually and thoroughly trained to observe and catch the bright as well as the dark side of English life, and the heart large and tender enough to appreciate all. He was now prepared to extend his rambles farther afield, and sailed for England in 1890, primarily to work in the cause of Indian Social Reform. He had discovered that the Provincial Governments as well as the Government of India were much too slow in taking up new ideas. By the time an officer reached the top and became a "Government" he was either too old to carry out his ideas, or so steeped in traditions that he could rarely take a broad view of men, measures and times. It is in rare cases only that the generosity of youth survives beyond a certain age. There comes a time when the most fertile mind ceases to grow. The gap between a people awakening from long sleep and trying to bridge the gulf with one desperate leap, and a bureaucracy with traditions of personal rule is naturally deep and wide. The Viceroy who can take a detached view of things often finds himself in a minority in his own Council. What is he, an outsider, to say to a body of experts, speaking with the assurance of long experience?

The change every five years makes for no continuity of policy, and no Viceroy, however able and strong he may be, has the opportunity of initiating a policy and developing it himself. He has to leave it to his successor, who may be entirely out of sympathy with the ideas of his predecessor. And the result is that the Government of India has no policy, and people in India cannot understand its aims.

Malabari found that to move the Government of India in the cause of social reform was like trying to move the Himalayas. He therefore decided to go to England and take the case of the child widows to the doors of the Parliament. He writes: "A trip to London has been my dream for years, a hope long deferred." "What could be more natural for a student of humanity, a pilgrim in search of the truths of life, than that he should now wish for a look at the other world beyond the seas, whose fortunes are so closely knit with those of his own?"

As a result of his travels he published "Indian Eye on English Life," a book both enjoyable and instructive. He writes:

"With London for its vantage ground, let the pilgrim look at the world's fair around! If he has eyes he can see a panorama of happiness and of misery spread out in wild profusion before him. If he has ears he may hear the throb of this great



big heart of the universe pulsating with the highest aspirations and with the lowest passions of humanity." He noticed, in common with Emerson, the great organizing powers of Englishmen. "A race that could conquer such a climate," remarked Malabari, "and carve out the utmost comforts of life out of it, deserves domination over all the elements of nature and freaks of fortune." Well might Pope sing:

Let India boast her palms, nor envy we  
The weeping amber, nor the spicy tree,  
While by our oaks those precious loads are borne,  
And realms command which those great trees adorn.

Another thing that struck Malabari was the freedom of women and the power they exercised in matters of the highest importance. In Englishwomen he found his strongest and best supporters. They welcomed and honoured him everywhere, and their lionizing would have turned the head of a lesser man. It was a new experience even for our knight-errant devoted to the cause of women and accustomed to the veiled life of the East. He writes in a half bantering and a half pathetic tone: "Often have I scattered the ladies in a friend's drawing-room, like chaff before the wind, dropping the book or the work as they fly, sometimes leaving a pair of tiny slippers behind as if to reproach the intruder for walking in unannounced. Ah me, when shall we have a real home in India? The

life in a decent English home is a life of equality among all the members."

Our pilgrim reformer had a strange way of feeling at home wherever he went, and in England no less than in India. He admired all that was good and noble in the life of the people, but he looked far into the future as to what would be the result of the "Golden" civilization which made life in the West a scene of such violent contrasts: vaulting luxury on one side and abject penury on the other, high culture and unredeemed brutishness. The thirst for gold which seemed to dominate all classes, from the millionaire to the shoe-black, gave him food for reflection and even made him exclaim, "If this be your English culture of the nineteenth century, let us remain ignorant in India. I had much rather that India remained superstitious enough to worship her stone gods. That means something of self-sacrifice; it lifts the worshipper out of himself. The worship of self is the worst form of idolatry."

Malabari found the greatness of the English nation in its freedom at home and its noble institutions which made it a nation of princes. He studied everything in relation to India, and realized that we have lived for ages on our spiritual capital and on traditions which are no more than a myth and an utterly useless myth, unless they serve as incentives for higher achievement in the future.

The British Parliament had loomed large before his mind, so he repaired to the Strangers' Gallery on the day when the Indian Budget was being discussed. It was a great disappointment. Mr. (afterwards Sir Henry) Fowler, the Secretary of State, was speaking on India. "What a rattling pace he goes on at," writes the visitor, "brushing aside objection after objection in that light-hearted fashion dear to the heart of the official expert! Away he runs with his optimistic oration till flesh and blood can bear it no longer. Here Sir W. Wedderburn puts in a humble caveat, whereupon the Maharajah of Westminster turns upon him fiercely. There Mr. Samuel Smith ventures in the mildest of his mild manner to correct a mistake. He is rewarded with a shrug of the ministerial shoulder, amid cheers from the opposition. Never in my life have I realized India in this position of utter helplessness. My poor country, such is thy fate, and such it will remain till thou knowest how to help thyself. God help India! Conservatives and Liberals, nor Radicals, will help her, seeing how much they have to help themselves every day of the year."

## CHAPTER IX

### GUJRAT AND GUJRATIS

BESIDES "Indian Eye on English Life" Malabari published a volume of short sketches under the title "Gujrat and the Gujratis." The book is a veritable picture gallery of Indian life, so varied by reason of its varying environment. Hindu, Muhammedan, Anglo-Indian, and Parsi types are all sketched with the touch of a true artist, showing at one and the same time the foibles and the redeeming traits of human character. The Marwari, the Vakil, the Hajjam, the Johukm magistrate, the Vaid, the Orthodox Hindu, and the Parsi shouting "Defeat, defeat to Shaitan," and having an eye on business even while at prayer, are all drawn with photographic fidelity.

Here is a little sketch of Meer Bakhtawar. It is the old story, representing a race of nobles, living in an age of peace, and cherishing the memory of their faded greatness, waiting for the day when they will again play a part worthy of their ancestry. "Mir Bakhtawar was a rich man; his father left him houses, valuable jewellery, and

cash. At eighteen he married a beautiful wife, and then he came out of the zenana only to ask for some money from Nihal Chand, whom he employed as a steward. He himself had no turn for business, and he could not bring himself so low as to be his own accountant. A son and heir was born to him and there was a great deal of merry-making and more money was needed. Nihal Chand was always there with his little wooden box and a smile. 'Not a rupee passed through my hands but some fraction of it found its way to my pocket. For a poor man must live, and it was clear that my master was rushing on to his ruin,' confessed Nihal Chand. They could not live on in a great style and on nothing; jewels were sold, houses were mortgaged, and yet they took great delight in the marriage of Nihal Chand, and sold their jewels to see it properly celebrated—a matter of three thousand rupees. The jewels, the jewel-hilted swords, the illuminated Persian manuscripts—in short, all the treasure of the noble house went for a mere song to Nihil Chand, who cared little for them.

“One day the child fell ill. Night and day the Hakim attended and wrote his elaborate prescriptions and the priest prayed his prayers. It was all useless, and the child died. For the first time the wife of the Mir appeared in person before the steward. She stood there in her dressing-gown,



divine in her loveliness, and all the lovelier because she was signed and sealed with the sacred trace of suffering which compels respect. 'You see, Nihal Chand,' she said, 'we must save our master's honour, we must give a fitting funeral to my child; is there nothing left—nothing that we could sell?' and the mother slipped her betrothal ring from her finger and gave it to Nihal Chand to sell, and the funeral took place with the usual formalities. The said Mir still lived in his grand house, a poor, weak, dazzled, incapable creature, ruined and helpless, on a pension which the Government gave him.

"It is the story of many an ancient family, some of them of royal blood, without profession, without education, subsisting on a bare pittance which the Government allows them, pledging it six months before it becomes due, and then spend it in a day. One day of real royal life, and then weary waiting for its return through another period of six months!"

Here is a picture of a Hajjam (barber) who plays a great part in the social life of India: "The operation generally takes place in the forenoon—immediately before the morning meal, patient and operator squat opposite to each other chewing *Pan Supari*, a process which the ignorant might mistake from a distance for making faces at each other. After discussion of the latest news, the

Hajjam takes out his tweezers and falls to picking the hair off his patient's forehead. There is torture unutterable . . . the more vigorously plies the hand of the Hajjam, the more gratefully grunts the Aryan brother. Then the Hajjam presses the patient's head downward. . . . The water is now applied for a few seconds, and then is applied the trusty razor, and it moves backwards and forwards. It makes a distinct noise, perhaps a wail, complaining of the rough surface. The razor has to glance north to south, east to west, to see all smooth as an ivory ball." The Hindus have always enjoyed a clean shave.

Our little picture gallery will be incomplete without the match-making and expectant mothers, a speciality of Gujrat.

"‘Sister,’ said Deva Kaur, ‘thy heart is not clear like mine. Did I not tell thee without asking that I was six months gone? . . . How far art thou?’

"‘I was so ashamed,’ said modest Sham Kaur. ‘You have done it so often, you might be joking and teasing. I am five months gone. . . . It will be a boy, I know.’

"‘I will have a girl,’ replied the impetuous Devakaur. ‘What say you to a match, sister mine?’

"‘It will be an honour to my family, I will ask my “this” (husband).

“That night Shamkaur’s ‘this,’ and Deakaur’s ‘this’ were consulted, and in less than a week the mothers expectant were married in the right Shrawak fashion, so that on the birth of their babies, if of different sex, they must be considered as married.”

“Gujrat and the Gujratis” was much appreciated, and ran into many editions.

Nature rarely unites in spirit those whom it unites in the ties of blood, but a divine dispensation permits union of souls in the choice of friends. Malabari found real friends outside his own community drawn to him under an impulse of irresistible affinity, who became one in heart and soul with him, in spite of the barriers of caste and creed. The friendship of Diwan Dayaram Gidumal placed him in touch with the spirit of Hinduism, and they both worked together for the good of the people. Diwan Dayaram is one of those great souls who come to make the world brighter and sweeter by their presence. He has devoted all his remarkable powers to serve the poor and the afflicted; living for others only. It was he who conceived the idea of a Seva Sadan or Home of Service.

Both in their early life studied together the problems of Hindu life and Hindu religion, and Malabari often wished to have the teachings of Hinduism compressed into a single book, freed

from the accretions of ages. He awoke one morning to find an answer to his silent appeal in the Hibbert lectures, which Professor Max Müller delivered, tracing the growth of Hinduism from simple nature worship to high flights of metaphysics. It was an attempt to reach the truth, without any bias or prejudice.

Professor Max Müller himself was a man, with deep religious feelings, as revealed in his "Thoughts on Life and Religion," but it was an age when everything that the intellect failed to account for was ridiculed. It was the beginning of scientific inquiry and the limitations of human intellect were ignored by men of science. They did not realize that men like Goethe's grasshopper, "that ever flits and flitting leaps, and still sings in the grass its old song," cannot transcend the limits of time, space, and causation.

Science has made great strides since Max Müller delivered his Hibbert lectures, and things have changed so much that Myers was in a position to say, "Night and storm, cloud and eclipse men have known from the earliest times, but now they know that even at noon-day the sunbeam which reaches them, when fanned into a spectrum is barred with belts and lines of varying darkness." They have learned also that where at either end the spectrum fades out into what for us is Blackness, there stretches onward in reality an undis-

covered illimitable ray, "and that the limits of the spectrum do not inhere in the sun that shines, but in the eye that makes the shining."

Max Müller studied Hindu books and gave things their true value in the light of higher criticism. The Vedas, he said, were the first gropings of the Indian mind after light and truth, they contained passages which were transcendental, and which may, according to Carlyle, be called Shrutis or revelations, but it was in the sun and the moon, the fire and the storm cloud that the ancients sought for the unseen deity that ruled the universe. They sought Him, the All Father, bright and pure, and boundless like the heavens, and like the heavens, too, silent and far off in the mighty forces of Nature, and eventually they called him *Daya Patar*, Heaven-Father. This was the highest altitude they reached in the realization of God.

Max Müller placed the teachings of the Vedas within the reach of anyone who could read English, and Malabari rejoiced to find the truth released from the labyrinth of commentaries, and clearly re-stated by a scholar who was free from all prejudice or bias. The Vedas taught the unity of God, and the philosophical doctrine of the "Absolute" has seldom found more decisive and striking expression than in the doctrine of the emancipating knowledge of the *Atma*.



In spite of the injunctions, "because as you have told me, O, Gautama, this doctrine has never up to the present time been in circulation among Brahmins, therefore, in all the worlds the Government has remained in the hands of the Warrior caste," it was appropriated by the Brahmins. They dealt with the Upanishads in their own subtle manner. They accepted the teachings outwardly, but buried the philosophic aphorism under a dead weight of commentaries. At best the Vedanta can only appeal to a select few, and its abstract concepts can never satisfy the hunger of the soul. They called it "secret doctrine," and forbade its study, except for the elect few.

Popular Hinduism is a strange mixture. As a religion its real teachings are not known to one in ten thousand. It withholds the love of God from the weak and the poor, enslaving half the population for the advantage of the elect, who are called "twice born." It is so comprehensive that it eludes attack, and holds in its meshes the entire population of India, excluding Mohammedans and Christians. It is either much too broad or much too narrow to inspire the simple village folk and the woman of India with firmness of faith and divine hope which leads to glory. The Hibbert lectures traced the origin and growth of the Hindu religion, and revealed its strong as well as its weak points. Malabari, therefore, resolved to translate

these lectures into all the spoken languages of India, so that the common people might know something of their ancient faith, and in the light of truth discard all that was useless and harmful. He was eager to lead his people to a life of truth. He was not afraid, like others, that the spirit of inquiry, if encouraged, might undermine the foundations of faith; on the contrary, he thought, with Morley, that earnest inquiry was the life of all true faith. "It is the power of giving up that which we in our best and most honest moments know to be no longer true. It is the readiness to replace the less perfect, however dear, however sacred it may have been to us, by the more perfect, however much it may be detested as yet by the world. Without this atheism, religion would, long ago, have become a petrified hypocrisy."

It is this spirit of honest inquiry which Malabari wished to promote. He wanted his people to find out for themselves what they accepted as "Sanatan Dharma." The "ancient Faith"? What is it? Where is it to be found? If it eludes the grasp of the educated mind, what about the uneducated masses? Is there nothing in the system to discard or to modify? The Hibbert lectures attempted to meet these questions.

Malabari expected great things from the translation of the Hibbert lectures into the vernaculars. He took up this task as "Samarpana," the con-

secration of all his energies. Listen in what profoundly earnest tone he announced his intention. "Every man has his ambition. This is the aim of one part of my life. If this series of translations brings peace to a few of my Aryan brothers in the midst of this troublous world, if it recalls to their memory the exploits of their illustrious ancestors, if, in my humble effort, they find an aid to the understanding of Parmanand, the Supreme Felicity, and Parmatma, the Supreme Being, the Uncreated, the Infinite, the Immortal, of whom one glance reflects the extent of the universe; if this attempt succeeds in opening to my compatriots the mind of the incomparable Aro-German, the Muni Max Müller, who has consecrated his whole life to the interpretation of the grandest phenomena of human history—the Aryan faith and the Aryan tongue—then I may truly feel the satisfaction of having attained my sacred aim."

Malabari travelled all over India to bring his idea to fruition, but his efforts attained only a partial measure of success. Subscriptions were promised for the publication and never paid. The funds collected were too small to carry out the whole project and it was with great difficulty that he managed to publish a few translations.

## CHAPTER X

### SOCIAL REFORM

THE publication of the Hibbert lectures was only the means to an end. Malabari wanted to show to the people, that many of their most cherished customs were not mentioned in the sacred books, and that society must be freed from the tyranny of caste and priests, if India was again to rise to a position worthy of her hoary past.

The froth and foam of city life, he said, does not affect the deep under-currents which have flowed unchanged for centuries and govern the tendencies of the Indian mind even now. It is the villager multiplied into millions who makes the Indian people, and with whom the social reformer has ultimately to count. What does the villager know or care for the new ideas? He has learnt through generations of mental slavery to follow the ways of his forefathers, the only way for the poor and the weak. He worships the stone god near his well as his fathers did before him. He fasts regularly, visits holy shrines, and without

understanding listens to recitals from the Brahmin's book. He prostrates himself before the Brahmin, kisses his feet, and believes in him blindly. He cannot sow or harvest his crop and eat the new grain without consulting the Brahmin and securing his blessings. He lives on in faith working for his living in this life, and for some dim form of salvation hereafter. He often starves himself to put together a few rupees in order to go to Jaggannath, Pragraj, or Benares. He leaps into the Ganges with full faith in the power of the holy water to wash away his sins. Nor is he forgetful of his ancestors; he feeds the Brahmin once a year on their behalf, so that in the far-off heaven they too may share the fruit of his unquestioning devotion. His Dharma, like the Dharma of his woman-kind, is to obey the Brahmin, to perform the usual ceremonies and to visit the sacred shrines. What good is it to tell him that his Vedas and Upanishads teach differently? He knows nothing about these, nor is likely to. The scriptures which are the pride and glory of India are closed to him. Their teachings are meant only for discussion by the elect. The Hindu villager may sometimes smile and quote the old proverb that "only the cowards and the weak follow the beaten track; the lion, the good son and the brave make a track of their own." But he does not feel equal to the effort. He lives as his forefathers lived



before him. He fully believes that the concatenation of causes and effects which is his Karma is responsible for his joys and sorrows, that good actions bear good fruit, and evil actions evil fruit, and that the only way to soften the rigour of Karma is through the Brahmin. You cannot argue with him. He will naïvely reply that he is not wiser than his forefathers, and there will close all discussion.

The educated men are little better than the villagers. They look upon the whole creation as an illusion and claim oneness with God, and yet worship stone gods and practise unrelieved exclusiveness in their own homes.

Religion without a personal God is a chimera. Metaphysical abstractions can never sweeten the lives of the suffering millions or save them from the piteous subjection to cruelty and wrong. The learned Brahmins themselves, who preach the unity of God and man, worship countless gods and goddesses and are the slaves of an elaborate ritual. If the gods have a shadow of human weakness they must be weary indeed of the fickleness of their devotees, turning from one object of worship to another, and believing with fullness of heart in none. To worship too many gods is worse than marrying too many wives and trying to love them equally. It is said, that when all the fair maidens of Gokul, drawn irresistibly by the magic of

Krishna's flute, left their homes and surrounded the Madan Murti (Image of Love), Indra, the god of thunder clouds, came down in great wrath, and threatened to wash away the whole earth. Krishna had to lift a great mountain on the tip of his finger to serve as an umbrella to protect the fair Gopees. The jealousy between the gods acting and reacting against one another has turned India into a land of slaves. The vaunted superiority of Hinduism is an exploded myth, condemned by the verdict of time and experience. It is no use propping up what no props can sustain. We must frankly admit that there is something wrong in our religion and social system, and search for new principles of intelligence and growth. It cannot be in the scheme of things that the Indian people, with all their simplicity, devotion, and purity of heart, shall for ever seek refuge from the new light in the old familiar caves darkened by ignorance and superstition. The spirit of self-sacrifice is there, the poorest peasant has it in plenty. All that he needs is a living faith and a simple code of ethics. Is he never to have his heart linked to a living and loving God? What good is it to talk of the pristine glory of Hinduism? Does it help the thirsty traveller to sit by the banks of a river that has run dry, and think of the time when a pure and ample stream flowed there, or to be content with a stagnant pool when a fresh stream is

flowing at his feet straight from the snow-topped Himalayas?

It was not out of pedantic vanity than men like Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chander Sen, Madhav Ranade, and Malabari insisted on the prime necessity of a change in our social environment. It is not against the Brahmins or any other class in particular that they have spoken and written, but against the system which goes under their name and sanction. Madhav Govind Ranade in our generation was himself a Brahmin, but he held that any powerful hierarchy which becomes the sole interpreter of truth and enslaves "sovereign reason as the serving drudge of superstition" is fatal to progress.

The Brahminical system must be judged by its results. It has existed for long centuries, and it has made us what we are, reducing a virile race to utter impotence. The system itself has lost little of its strength. It has found new methods of recuperation. It needs but a little detachment, but a little perspective, to follow its insidious activities. The noblest spirits of the country wander in the regions of doubt and disbelief, sometimes doubting their own existence, sometimes claiming not only kinship, but real unity with God. Life is not long enough to penetrate the veil of Maya and reach the "Absolute" which, as William James says, "is neither intelligence nor will, neither a self nor

a collection of selves . . . but, in fact, a meta-physical monster."

Common folk, however devout, are never to read the scriptures. They must follow the Brahmin. They try to lead pure, simple lives, believing in nothing or in everything, worshipping trees and stones, and innumerable shrines. The "All Father," who could draw out their hearts to their fullest capacity, and raise their devotion to the highest pitch, is eclipsed by lesser gods and goddesses. They are told that they cannot understand . . . and they seem to think that "the ancient tradition of knowledge actually contains that approved truth which has just been pronounced unattainable." Only a limited number, the intelligent minority, belong to these; behind them stand the whole population, men and women with hearts ready to believe and hands ready to act, dominated by a priestly class trading upon their traditional ignorance.

It has become the fashion to admire the selflessness of the Indian woman, her devotion and self-denial. But what about man, who can accept their sacrifice so lightly? What about his callousness to the claims of girl-wives condemned to premature motherhood; trying to be devoted and true in the only possible way they know of? "The web of Indian life," is a web indeed. Once in its meshes there is no possibility of freedom or escape. The

interests of a whole race are sacrificed to gratify an idle sentiment.

The task of Social Reform in India is like summoning new ideals of life from the cremation ground of the old. Buddha, Srikrishna, Ramchandra, Chaitnya and Guru Nanak have all endeavoured to give a pure religion to India, but with little success. Such is the power of esotericism, when it has usurped the place of reason, that it absorbs new ideas into its own cavernous depths just as the dark blue waters of the Indian Ocean absorb the sunshine which glitters for a moment on its rippling surface.

Social Reform in India implies an entire change in the outlook of the people in their relation to all that they believe in for the salvation of their souls. It must aim at the dethronement of a whole system of doctrine that has held sway over millions for generations. It is not merely a question of external readjustment; it means little less than a religious revolution, and requires the conscious self-sacrifice of hundreds in the making of a new road for the silent millions to follow.

Malabari resolved to devote his last breath to one side of the question only—to the emancipation of Indian women. He embarked on his mission with all the earnestness of an apostle. He went from place to place, making speeches, arguing with people who would accept no argument, writ-



ing in papers, and doing all he could to place the question of infant marriages and child widows in the forefront of all the problems of India.

“The British Government,” he wrote, “put down Infanticide by Law. That was a great gain to society. But we find infant marriage in practice a more serious evil than infanticide. For whereas the latter was one short struggle, an ill-assorted infant marriage entails lifelong misery on either or both parties. Infant marriage is the cause of many of our social grievances, including enforced widowhood. The area of selection is so narrow, when society is split up into numerous castes and sub-castes, that practically Hindu parents have little scope for selection; they must accept the first boy or girl available, or buy the one who comes cheapest, all things considered. There may be physical defect or moral taint on one side or the other. But so long as this and no other match is to be secured, why, it must be secured at all risks. What wonder, then, if many of these forced unions turn out unhappy? The physical defect may increase with age, the moral taint may grow into a malady. The wife may outgrow the husband, or the husband may become fit for the grave when the wife becomes fit for his home. There may be total or partial absence of physical adaptability, or hopeless disparity of temperament. In any of these events the ‘married martyrs,’ as

they have been aptly described, are socially alienated from each other, though perhaps living under the same roof. These are some of the many dread contingencies."

"But let us take the union to turn out happy, as it no doubt turns out in a large number of cases. What follows? A too early consummation of the nuptial troth, the breaking down of constitution, and the ushering in of disease; the giving up of studies on the part of the boy husband, the birth of sickly children, the necessity of feeding too many mouths, poverty and dependence, a disorganized household—leading perhaps to sin. In short, it comes to a wreck of two lives grown old almost in youth, which might in favourable circumstances have attained to happy and respectable age." That this is not an overdrawn picture will be admitted by those who have even a superficial acquaintance with the domestic affairs of our people.

"We are often told by benevolent Let-Aloneists," he writes again, "that the only remedy possible is to educate public opinion on the subject, and then to set this educated public opinion to cope with the evil. This is no doubt a sound doctrine. But where such a very small portion of the population of India have received elementary education after so many years, the chances of bringing educated public opinion as a force to bear upon the question are extremely slender."

“I have never heard an argument in favour of infant marriage as a national institution, except that it is enjoined by the Shastras. But so far as I have been able to see, no Shrastra enforces marriage proper on a girl under twelve years of age, when presumably the boy must be between 15 and 20.”

“It appears to me that the State has a right to insist upon having the best available servant, if not the best available citizen. If so, the head of a department may prefer the unmarried candidate to the married, all other qualifications being equal. I am not blind to the risk to which this proposal is open, but the advantages far outweigh every possible inconvenience. The Education Department may give a few chapters in its School Books, describing the evil in its various forms. I suspect that something very like gentle moral pressure had to be exercised by friendly officials, when schools for girls were first opened in the Mofussil. Parents would not allow their daughters to be out of sight for a few hours every day. But the thing had to be done. Shut up these schools to-day, and I dare say the people will make a grievance of it.”

Speaking of Hindu widows: “As a matter of fact the Hinduani is, by blood and tradition, an excellent type of womanhood in all the relations of life. But, in modern India, woman seems to

have become, as if by common consent, the inferior of man as a social unit. She is married in infancy. In case of the early death of the husband she has perpetual widowhood before her. Even though still an infant, her life is a social failure. In most things she is at the mercy of others, because the average Hindu widow is not able to appreciate and protect her rights as a member of society. To many it is a wonder that the world hears so little of the results of such social inequality. I believe that is so because woman is the sufferer. It is not in her nature to publish her wrongs, however great. The widows of Gujrat and of Maharashtra, of Bengal, of the North-West, of the Punjab, of Madras, have often set forth their grievances, in prose and verse, in odes and elegies. We hear of a case now and again, in which the widow is the guardian angel of the house and of the street, who, having lost the sharer of her joys and her sorrows while yet a girl, consecrates her womanhood exclusively to works of charity, cherishing the hope of union in a better world. But if there are thousands of such saintly beings in Hindustan, there must be millions of simple misguided creatures, exposed to all sorts of trials and temptations whose lives are a curse to themselves, and in some instances a standing menace to society."

"It is sometimes urged that enforced widow-

hood must be accepted as a necessary evil. If so, the question arises: Is the Hindu woman reconciled to the evil? No. She is and has long been in revolt against this inhuman custom. Educated young women and many of the orthodox school are anxious to be saved. Why then do they not shake off the evil? Because the Hindu is hard to move. Caste exercises overpowering influence. Caste is more potent in its secret persecution than was the inquisition of Spain. Not only are the offending couple excommunicated, but their relations and friends, too, may become outcasts henceforth and for ever. Suttee was one single act of martyrdom, of heroism as the victim conceived it, and an act of religious merit according to popular belief; the life which caste imposes on an unwilling widow, is a perpetual agony, a burning to death by slow fire, without any chastening or elevating effect on the sufferer, or any moral advantage to the community at large by way of compensation."

"Caste has no objection to the widower marrying again as often as he likes, and more women than one at a time, if he so wishes. Its cold-blooded philosophy is reserved only for the woman who has lost her husband, that is, her all in life. Here, then, there is a conflict between State and caste: Who is stronger?"

"Now I am not one of those who are for violent interference by the State or for abrupt re-



forms. We must move with the times, carrying the people with us. All that now seems to be needed, is the interposition of authority to a small extent. Let the Government rule:

“(1) That no Hindu girl who has lost her husband or her betrothed, if she is a minor, shall be condemned to lifelong widowhood against her will.

“Here I need not be reminded of Act XV of 1856. It is a fairly adequate provision in itself. But what has it done for the remarried widow and her friends in the course of the last twenty-eight years? Practically it has remained a dead letter. I ask for a little more than this. The existing provision must be made known to the victims and enforced in their favour by all possible means. The secret opposition of caste must be met by some indirect encouragement to them from the Government.

“(2) Arrangements must be made in suspected cases to ascertain whether a widow has adopted perpetual seclusion voluntarily or whether it has been forced upon her.

“(3) That every widow, of whatever age, shall have the right to complain to the authorities of social ill-usage (over and above excommunication) and that proper facilities shall be afforded

her for the purpose, such as the gratuitous service of counsel, exemption from stamp-duty, attendance at Court, and so on.

“(4) That the priest has no right to excommunicate the relations and connections of the parties contracting second marriage, besides excommunicating the principals.”

“Emancipate the women of India, ye English rulers: restore to the widow her birthright, of which she is robbed by usurpers who owe no allegiance to God or to man. Give her back the exercise of freewill. Is it meet that in the reign of the most womanly Queen, the women of India should remain at the mercy of a foul superstition? Raise the status of our women, and in time England shall be furnished with a Volunteer Corps, a million strong, win the blessings of India's women, the most grateful amongst a grateful nation. Education by itself has failed to secure influence in the country. Our educated young men want position. They are no match for the priestly class who are, in a sense, better educated. The priest is an institution which the poor men worship, and the rich men think it a privilege to bow to. Besides, as long as this priestly class has been on the defensive against the attacks from within and without, the organization—that is, the power to work together—has become the law of their very

existence. Has the educated man, the young reformer, any of these advantages? Modern education has made him both impatient and offensive. He has no hold on the popular mind. Not only have his orthodox neighbours no confidence in the educated young reformer, but they look upon his doctrines with positive distress. Then again, in many cases, his acts fall short of his words. Let the people be addressed directly in their own vernaculars. Let the Poet and the Pundit go hand in hand, scattering the seed of true knowledge broadcast among the masses, to bear fruit in time. Let Government move to some extent under a sense of humiliation that a hundred years of British rule could do but so little towards the amelioration of the social condition of its subjects. And let the people, too, now move for very shame, remembering that there is no hope of political elevation for so long as we live, and apparently love to live, in such social degradations."

Even this lucid and touching appeal failed to make any impression on the minds of the people, who, like birds that are obedient to the mesmerizer, move only along appointed lines, having lost all power to order their lives on rational lines, or to act in consonance with their own aspirations for a larger and broader political life.

## CHAPTER XI

### HINDU MARRIAGES

MALABARI had not the leaping, lightning enthusiasm of Keshab Chander Sen, which for a time carried everything before it, and created a new centre of thought, aiming at the establishment of a simple and theistic creed, open to men of all castes and denominations.

Keshab Chander realized the spiritual enslavement of his people, and kindled a blaze of intellectual zeal for social improvement. It seemed as if the awakening had really come, but it was not so. Men of light and leading came forward to champion the old system, and created a spark-gap which short-circuited the new current. Keshab's church is still on its trial and has made little progress since his death.

Malabari, however, believed in small beginnings, though he had the courage to take up the most vital questions. The solution of Indian problems, he said, was in the lap of the women of India. He used to laugh at the idea of imprisoning eternal fires, and he traced the downfall of India from the day when people sought to protect

feminine virtue within the four walls of the zenana. The future of India, he argued, is bound up with the problems of women, and it is because they are ignorant and shut off from life that we have no real home life, and consequently we are deprived of those silent, but all-powerful influences, which mould the child's character, and fit men to be heroes. It is in the development of woman's true nature, that we must seek the future greatness of our people. In the moral and spiritual education of men, in the refinement of life, and improvement of home, in the bringing-up of children, and in the implanting of a true faith in the hearts of men, the sphere of women is absolutely boundless. Who but women can inspire men with a high-minded resolve for noble deeds? Who but women can help the organization of charity, and provide comfort for the desolate, the ignorant, and the friendless, and bring to the sick and the weary the love of a mother?

Our wiseacres, he said, are afraid that acceptance of new ideas may disturb the faith of the common people in things that they now hold sacred, and thus lead to the disruption of society. They forget that the truth has a power for good which is greater by far than that of all the clever palliatives devised to enslave human intellect. If we honestly believe that infant marriages are bad, we must put a stop to them without troubling



about side issues. If we believe enforced widowhood is a menace to society, we must allow nothing to stand in the way of reform. If we think education and freedom is good for women, we must not think of personal inconvenience. Have we become such imbeciles, he asked, as to need special protection from ourselves?

It has been sometimes urged by European upholders of Indian customs that marriage is a spiritual union, and a widow must remain a widow all her life. But is it true? Marriage may be spiritual in cases where the parties marry of their own choice. But when persons are united in wedlock who have never seen each other? Unless, of course, it be argued that all marriages are pre-ordained, and a divine power guides the parents in bringing about such unions, how can such unions be eternal? If they are eternal, what of the millions of child-widows, doomed from the cradle to the grave to an unnatural life? Christians may perhaps be justified in objecting to a second marriage, as Christianity enjoins monogamy, and promises a reunion in another world, but how can Hindus justify it with their sanctioned polygamy? Is it not too much to expect a woman to sacrifice her life for a husband whom she has never seen, and when, even beyond the grave, she may be confronted with rivals, claiming their share of her husband's love?

Malabari did not advocate that every widow should marry. He honoured those who consecrated themselves to the memory of those they loved, but he held that it was a sin to ignore the expressed desire of a widow for remarriage. He pleaded for thousands who were not born saints, who become widows in their childhood, and are made of common clay. Is it reasonable to expect a young woman to be happy without a home of her own, without any serious occupation, with hardly any glimpse of joy and sunshine, and doomed to remain all her life a dark shadow in the house of her parents? No one objects to a widower remarrying as many times as he likes. He is at liberty to form as many spiritual unions as he likes. It is only the widow who does not count, and must sacrifice her life because it has been ordained by man and the custom of the country.

Malabari found his own people immovable and appealed to the Government for help. "How can a Christian Government hold aloof and allow the women of India to suffer from social wrong"? The Hindus are a most law-abiding people, but their clinging to corrupt and corrupting social customs," he pleaded, "is proof positive of their inability to help themselves even when afflicted by cruel evils." "The people cannot give up ancient customs till there is some power behind their back." "Who is to do this?" asked Malabari.

“The Government are wringing their hands in despair, the people cannot do it for themselves, and the old law prevails.”

If Government does not like to interfere with the social life of the people, he said, why should it not enact a Civil Marriage Law, free from the evils that are embodied in the old system and offering an opportunity, to those who wish, of marrying under a just and equal law for both parties? It will interfere with no religion and custom, and affect only those who wish to avail themselves of its advantages. Indians who have discarded old customs, ways, and habits, have a right to claim an equitable marriage law. And the State has the highest interest in enacting a Civil Marriage Act for the ever-growing body of men and women, who find the existing law inadequate and unjust. Such an Act, when passed, may, by its simplicity, lead ultimately to the modification of the present marriage code, so obviously unjust to the weaker sex. No one can object to a Civil Marriage Act which is merely of a permissive nature.

Malabari's appeal met with all kinds of criticism. “We cannot afford to have love letters, flirtations, and amorous fancies in our households,” wrote one. “Our widows are happy enough, and never think of marrying again,” pleaded another. “The sanctity of the ancient laws must be preserved,”

quoth a third. "There are many failures in marriages by choice," triumphantly exclaimed a fourth. "Ours is the best system," said a fifth, who wrote with the finality of the *laissez faire* school. Even such a kindly scholar as Principal Wordsworth argued "that the bad customs should be left to the influence of time, that infant brides and virgin widows cannot really be so very miserable since human nature is wonderfully elastic and adapts itself to any circumstances."

"It does indeed. But at what fearful cost?" exclaimed Malabari. "Is it right to endure preventible misery? If men and women are to meet freely, as they did in Vedic times, why should there be no courtships, no expression of mutual esteem? Is not love the purest and the holiest thing on earth, and the hope of obtaining it one day, of winning and wearing it next one's heart, the greatest thing in the life of men and women?"

"Flirtation is a naughty little amusement," wrote Malabari, "but it is often a healthy exercise for the heart and nerves, and steadies that uncontrollable little rebel. Are all widows happy? If so, what of the skeletons in the cupboards?"

As for the failures of marriage in the West, that does not prove that because some people make a mistake, others should not be allowed to have any choice. The Western system, however,

affords proof positive of what freedom of choice can do to ensure freedom of life to a nation, endowing individuals with some of the noblest qualities of human nature. It is freedom at home, which has ensured for European countries their free institutions, and made the English people a nation that dominates the world. What has our system done? Has it not destroyed trust between man and woman, and man and man? Where is the sanctity of a system which has broken up a valiant people and placed social gyves on all free movement? "If the Hindus are happy at home, and brave and patriotic and enterprising abroad," wrote Malabari, "in spite of the custom of baby marriages, how much happier, braver, more patriotic, more enterprising they would be if they eschewed the unnatural custom? A good deal, no doubt, depends on how we define happiness. If it means a state of brute contentment at home, we are doubtless a happy race. But in that case the happiest of mortals are our cousins the Red Indians. Are we prepared to go by this standard in determining happiness?"

"No, but things must take their course, they say, till education makes indubitable angels of what are doubtful men, a matter of a few centuries at the earliest. So our educated reformers sleep on, until the time may come when we may possibly consider if the marriageable age of girls



is to be 7 or 9." What rapid progress, what a hopeful future!

We lay great store by the wonderful progress of the Japanese, but it was not thus that the Japanese acted. They did not leave it to time to introduce such changes as it might. They took up the question of national reform in full earnest, and in thirty years accomplished what it may take centuries for India to postulate.

It is often argued that Japan had its own Government. But so had India before the advent of the Muhammedans. What did Hindus do? Even now, though India has not a Government of its own, it is fortunate in having a Government which, after centuries of strife, unites the country into one geographical whole and guarantees personal freedom. It is not the fault of the Government that we cling to a carcase with one hand and grasp at life with the other. It is for the people, and especially for the English-educated classes, to act. It is on them that the future of the country mainly depends. Malabari raised the alarm. Is his cry to be a cry in the wilderness? Let us hope it will be taken up and find an answering echo in the hearts of the community, and finally lead to the solution of the all important social problem.

Malabari, after years of incessant labour, obtained "The Age of Consent Bill," which marks

a step forward. It was not this measure that he had worked for. He thought it would be less effective and much more troublesome in operation, than the simple permissive or enabling act he had applied for. This he would assuredly have secured, but for the artificial agitation in some parts of the country which prevented the Government from doing what they wished, and he was deprived of the fruits of his efforts by the opposition of his own countrymen, who were carried away by the glamour of flowery words, and failed to work for a cause on which rests the future of India. The Age of Consent Bill met with great opposition from Bengal. The main points were obscured by side issues which puzzled the Government. The result was that a measure which would have helped social reform generally, was merely confined to raising the Age of Consent for the consummation of marriage to twelve years.

Many years have since passed, and the question of child marriages still remains where it was. Our politicians are too busy to take up domestic questions, which make no appeal from the public platform. They are out for national independence, or for self-good. These are braver words than social emancipation, though without it no free institutions are possible.

## CHAPTER XII

### IDEAS ON EDUCATION

MALABARI counted on the support of the educated classes when he started on his social reform campaign. He was deeply disappointed to find a large majority of the "men of light and leading" amongst his countrymen ranged against him. He made allowances, with his usual generosity, for the conservatism of the common people, but he could not understand the blind adherence of men, who professed progressive views, and were eager to win new ways of life for their country, to customs and social usages which were in no way compatible with their professed aspirations.

National revival begins at the top, and spreads down to the common people, till the entire population feels the zest and the tingle of a new life. What hope was there for India when they who ought to be in the van had not the courage to face the situation, and selfishly or timidly clung to fossilized systems.

Malabari was in the habit of tracing all effects to

their causes, and he set himself to inquire into the educational system which produced men who had no faith in the opinions they professed. He was anxious to find out if there was any indigenous system of education which could be revived and improved to suit modern conditions. His inquiries showed him that there was no system of education which could be called national. Here and there men like Vigana Bikhshu kept a school of philosophy and attracted pupils, who gathered round their teacher, drawn to him by his fame and their own love of learning, devoted themselves whole-heartedly to their Guru, and tried to come in close touch with his informing mind, so as to receive the full inspiration of his ideas. They were given instruction in the art of reading and writing, but were never encouraged to follow an independent line of inquiry. They had to accept in an unquestioning spirit the teachings of their Guru, and to subject their own judgment to the ancient word, consequently there never was any liberal education in India. All intellectual efforts was confined more or less to expounding old theories and writing new commentaries.

A school of Sanskrit flourished up till recent times at Benares. It was the only institution of its kind in India, and gave instruction to a small number of Brahmin boys who, after years of hard work, learned to read and write Sanskrit. The

people as a whole received no education. The only book which came within the reach of the masses was the "Ramayana," which we owe to the unrivalled genius of Tulsi Das.

During the Muhammedan period the professional classes learned Urdu and Persian, as they now learn English. Rajah Ram Mahan Rai could write and speak Persian with the same facility as Babu Surendra Nath Bannerji can write and speak English. It may, therefore, be admitted that the idea of popular education in the true sense of the word is wholly modern. But India has again its usual bad luck. It is a great pity that the belief is growing in Anglo-Indian circles that higher education is responsible for much of the troubles which India has been recently passing through. Some have even gone so far as to suggest that higher education should be placed beyond the means and capacity of the average student. It is forgotten that "A wise enemy is better than a foolish friend," and modern education has banished the chronic anarchy which prevailed in India. Even the most impatient of our "impatient idealists" cannot fail to realize that in the strength and statesmanship of the British Government rests the salvation of the Indian people. It is not the fault of education, but of the educational system, which is responsible for choking the brains of our young men with ill-digested ideas entirely



foreign to their environment, and demanding a standard of efficiency which is beyond the capacity of an average student. It is the overwrought brain and eyes blinded by incessant poring over the printed page that become hypnotized by the mirage of political independence, and are responsible for the ruined mind and body of hundreds.

Malabari studied the question fully. He urged constantly that the whole scheme of studies from top to bottom should be modified. The higher studies were, he said, completely divorced from the history and traditions of India, and made too great a demand on memory. The elementary education meant primarily for the agriculturists gave no instruction in agriculture, and was unattractive and of little practical use. In provinces like the Punjab, where people have a language and a literature of their own, instruction is conveyed through the medium of a high-flown Urdu which is intelligible only to those who have studied Persian. The system of primary education in many provinces seemed to exist mostly for the sons of Patwaris and other small officials, who were scribes by profession and caste.

He often told me that he knew from his own personal experience that the syllabus of secondary education was beyond the capacity of the average pupil, and over-taxed his powers. Our boys

have to struggle with a foreign language besides struggling with poor health, the result of early marriage, brain fag, and poor nourishment. The programme having been prepared without a correct appraisal of the mental and physical capacity of the Indian boy, only atrophied or else inflated his youthful brain.

Most of the boys in high schools and colleges are married men with families at home. They have to work fourteen hours a day under a terrible strain. At college they learn to memorize the text of their lectures, without attempting to think for themselves, and, in the same way, when they grow up, they generally merely re-echo the leading articles of their favourite newspapers. The endeavour has always been to raise the standard of education—a praiseworthy effort indeed, if it did not mean an attempt to make the student absorb more and more indigestible knowledge which he can barely assimilate. In short, he was of opinion that our educational system lacked the spirit and the breath of life, taking no account of the human material it has to deal with. It left little scope for the growing mind to develop on its own lines, and was therefore bound to fail. At present the youth who goes through our educational grind is generally fit for little better than the routine work of a clerkship, or for the professions which require no originality or initiative.

In his walks round Jakko, at Simla, he used to outline his own ideas on education. The agriculturists, he used to say, should be better educated to be better farmers, to have cleaner homes, and to produce a larger quantity of grain. Every peasant should receive sufficient education to be able to protect himself from the abuses of the police, the Tehsil Chaprasi, and the landlord; in short, of whoever possesses an official badge, and consequently claims his toll of oppression. The present system of primary education was of little use to the people—the schoolmaster himself knew little that was useful. People must have bread before education, and in many parts of India village people were much too poor to afford any time for the school. Few of the village schools were fully equipped to teach even the three R's completely. In the lower primary schools the instruction comes to an end before the boys have mastered the barest rudiments of the art of reading and writing, and the upper primary schools were very few and far between. Malabari thought that the idea of compulsory education was being pushed much before its time. The right way to promote popular education was not to compel village boys to go to school, but to make the school so attractive that boys could not keep away from it. If the school became the boast and the pride of the village, and the boys that went there

became better agriculturists and better artisans, the school would soon be crowded, and there would be no need to talk of compulsion. Compulsion could never add to the happiness of the people. We should begin slowly, and on lines that were natural and spontaneous, and in harmony with the customs and the traditions of the country. The school in a village should be a place that the villagers loved and respected. The schoolmaster should be a villager himself, familiar with the simplest modern methods of agriculture, and occupying the position of "guide, philosopher, and friend" to his fellow villagers. Half-a-dozen good schools would do more to popularize primary education than a hundred meagre reservoirs of instruction which teach nothing useful.

As for higher education, Malabari was not afraid of having too many graduates; he often said we can never have a sufficient number of educated men in India. He was, however, entirely opposed to the present system of high education, which, according to him, was in need of great reform. He had great admiration for Lord Curzon and his work, but he did not think his educational policy was a success, or that the raising of the standard of education must necessarily mean a corresponding improvement in the calibre and capacity of the pupil. An Indian boy is not physically as strong as an English boy, he argued.

It is cruel to cram his atrophied brain with too many subjects.

Sound education is an equipment for life. A system of education that impaired health and robbed the individual of his capacity for healthy enjoyment did more harm than good. The boys who join colleges come mostly from families who have for generations earned their living by the pen. *They must pass the examination or starve*, and they bow to the inevitable, but other classes leave it alone. It is beyond them and not to their taste. Minds are far more various and infinitely more subtle than the bodies, gross garments of the soul, Malabari used to say. It was madness to attempt to have the same standard of education for weak Indian boys as for sturdy English lads. The Indian Universities prescribed a syllabus and held examinations which left little scope for individual development. The result, Malabari said, was that, man for man, the educated Indian of pre-British days was better fitted for life than the modern B.A. He had a mind of his own, and was able to procure for himself a certain amount of genuine intellectual pleasure. The educated man of to-day with his drill coat and trousers, and his copy-book politics can hardly order his own life in a comfortable manner, and is for ever at war with himself and the world.

Malabari insisted that the courses should be



graduated to suit the capacity of an average Indian boy, leading him to the gates of the "King's Treasuries," and leaving him to draw upon them according to his own God-given brain power. He used to deplore deeply the disappearance of religious education from the country. He did not believe that it could be imparted in schools and colleges. The religious emotions are awakened by the mother, and implanted in the infant mind by her selfless love and devotion. He thought no religious education was possible till mothers became the teachers, and the wide gulf bridged over which separates the ideals of home and school.

"If we regard home as an educational institution, a circumnavigator of the world is less influenced by the nations he has seen than by his nurse," remarked Jean Paul, and Malabari always said that all moral tendencies find their real nourishment in the atmosphere of home. What advantages, he asked, can a home offer which is the centre of ignorance and superstition? Woman especially must learn to see beyond and above the horizon which for centuries has limited and obscured her vision, before she can make her home a shrine of sacred fire, kindling youthful hearts with devout aspirations. She must feel the struggle which is in progress between the new life and the old prejudice, "between the obstructive indolence and inertia of the many, and the generous mental

activity of the few," to give the new movement an inwardness which it can never acquire without her support.

Malabari fully recognized that the educational problem needed generous financial support and the co-operation of all classes and creeds. He often argued that endowments made for public purposes should be used for public purposes. If all the charitable endowments were brought under proper control, they would provide sufficient funds, he thought, to start a movement for the education of women. He was for levying an educational cess on all religious endowments, and gradually increasing it till it became the means of financing female education. In his own small way he endeavoured to create a new centre of education in his Seva Sadan which he founded in Bombay with an ambitious scheme of training "Sisters Ministrant," who, he hoped, would diffuse knowledge in crowded cities and village hamlets. The idea is full of immense possibilities, but there are no funds to help the institution in its great work. The educated public has neglected it completely. What good are social conferences and academic discussions when the heart within refuses to accept the verdict of truth, and genuine work receives no support? The mothers, wives, sisters, cling tenaciously to customs, which have acquired the sanctity of religion in their eyes, and even the most

advanced Indians have to endure the yoke. Nevertheless it is considered wise to allow them to remain in ignorance. Who is to help the growth of the larger ideas of life?

It is in the hearts of our women, pleaded Malabari, that the gospel of the new life must first take root, manifesting itself finally in the mountain-moving faith which works miracles. Without their education, no education for men is possible. This was his last word on the question.

## CHAPTER XIII

### POLITICAL WORK

THE publicist who "ploughs his lonely furrow" does not generally command popularity. At best they call him an unpractical idealist, and Malibari from the very beginning refused to identify himself with any party—though he was ready to help all good causes. He stood between the officials and the people with an up-raised arm telling them both to look above and beyond the horizon. The Government can gain in strength, he said, by securing the confidence of the people in its sense of justice, and in its earnest desire to serve the best interests of the country, and he told his own people that national unity must precede political freedom.

"What is prestige without love and confidence to support it?" he asked of the rulers. "You have equipped him (the educated Indian) for a new life, and yet you would condemn him to the old. Is this fair, desirable, possible?" Turning to the people he fearlessly reminded them that "the Government of India is, after all, but a human institution, subject to all the frailties of human

nature, and groaning under all its limitations of power. Remember, the public life of a nation is but an elaboration of its family life. The marriage system of India is, indeed, her problem of problems, the mystery, the passion play of her daily life, stamping all her national concerns, arts, sciences, industries, commerce, and agriculture with its own mark of premature development, arrested growth and early decay."

It was social reform more than political institutions which India needed, he thought, and all through life he worked towards its attainment. As a young man he was caught by the idea of an Indian National Congress. He would have given his life to organize a national movement of earnest workers drawn from all classes and creeds, with a clear understanding of the past and a true vision of the future, devoted to the cause of national unity and to the removal of all that goes to make national life impossible for Indians. He hoped that the National Congress would devote itself to nation building, and that it would create a centre of unity drawing Hindus, Muhammedans, and Christians into bonds of brotherhood, and firing them with a common aspiration to realize Indian nationality. Such a movement would have been truly national in its character, and if it might have appealed but little to the Government, it would have appealed greatly to the people.



He joined the Congress when it was started, but left it soon after, as it devoted itself more and more to what he called "transcendental politics." He was, however, of opinion that the officials were wrong in keeping away from it. He always thought that unless officials made the aspirations of young India their own, and took part in the various movements that are now coming into existence, there was a risk that the gulf between the Government and the people would be widened. The Government, being foreign, must study the trend of thought in India, and join popular movements to guide patriotic energies into fruitful channels, and secure the confidence of the rising generations in its good intentions.

Malabari, on the other hand, was afraid that if men of light and leading continued to employ their intelligence and power in opposing the Government, the peril to India would be real, and ultimately a serious crisis might arise in Indian affairs, which would delay the progress of the country indefinitely. He was convinced that the country was not ripe for self-government, and as far as his vision could see, the possibilities of a Government on colonial lines were remote and uncertain.

He was, however, sincerely of opinion that the basis of the Government in India should be broadened by making use of all the talent that the

country produced in the government of the country. The scheme of constitutional reform, introduced by Lords Morley and Minto, owes not a little to his discreet but chivalrous advocacy. India has always produced individuals fit to adorn any position in life, and no Government could afford to ignore, or drive into the opposite camp men who came with God-given powers to be the leaders of men. In the olden times the Court of a king made room for poets and artists and men of good families. Now they can only find scope for their powers on public platform or in the press, and most of them wasted their time, and wasting it bred discontent. They had no place in the government of the country, and their influence was being used against the Government and was a source of danger. Malabari therefore rejoiced when the Councils were enlarged and Indians were allowed seats on the Executive Council. He would have liked to give all the provinces a Council and an Indian member. It meant, in his opinion, additional strength to the Government.

He had, however, grave misgivings as to the ultimate success of separate electorates for Hindus and Muhammedans. He was very apprehensive lest it should intensify sectarian jealousies and undo the work of the last fifty years, which was slowly advancing higher ideals of justice between man and man, irrespective of caste and creed.

He was afraid that if District and Municipal Boards were also to have communal electorates, they would only serve to spread animosity between the Hindus and the Muhammedans in the villages, where all communities had hitherto lived in peace. He held that all those who live in India have common interests, and that ill-will between them can only retard the moral and material progress of the country and weaken the Government, as its strength lies in doing even-handed justice without fear or favour. Malabari, therefore, wished the Government to retain its British character and allow each community to develop on its own lines, animated by a spirit of healthy rivalry, each emulating the other in attainment to its own maximum of strength, and thus adding to the power and capacity of the nation as a whole.

He was anxious that the Government of India should retain its vantage ground of doing justice to all, and give up "living on shifts and expedients," which only put off the evil day. The British Government has done much for India, he used to say, but there is a great work to be done in the future, more difficult and perhaps more thankless, in preparing a congeries of many nationalities for a homogeneous life, and holding out the promise of free institutions as the crown of its administrative effort.

He was of opinion that the time had come when

Government ought to have a definite policy. No Government can afford to live on its past and neglect the measures which all Governments, whether autocratic or democratic, have to take in order to carry popular opinion with them. The Government of India is singular in this, that it has neither introduced Western methods of winning public confidence, nor has it adopted the Eastern methods which dazzle the public mind by the splendour of court pageantry and by occasional displays of lavish generosity and spectacular justice. It is content to administer the country in its own way and is disdainful of policies, without which no Government can continue to be successful. Malabari held that what is wanted is a dominant ideal which may inspire the people and the officials, and unite them both for its attainment. The Government of India was becoming more or less a machine, and losing that personal touch which counts for so much in India.

An English officer of former days took pride in his work, devoted all his energies to push forward schemes of public utility. It used to be his dream to administer the land, more or less according to the traditions of his own country. The people under him marvelled at his goodness, looked up to him as Ma Bap—"Father and Mother"—and more or less constantly acquired the habit of appealing in their difficulties to his higher nature.

He indeed tried to be a father to his people, and to live up to the ideal which they had of him. He was loved, respected, and often revered. The modern official, like the people, is passing through a period of transition. He has changed and is still changing. He finds it difficult to reconcile the surging of the new life with the placidity of the old. He condemns what is often nothing but the exuberance of youthful spirits. He sometimes ignores the policy followed by higher authorities, and fails therefore—often unconsciously—in loyalty to his own Government. "Loyalty does not mean the selfish humouring of one's own sweet will," Malabari observed, "but disinterested attachment to the crown and the nation they have come out to serve." The official in an ordinary district usually takes his cue as to Indian character from time-servers who come to "salaam" to him every morning. He perhaps resents the presence of men of independent views, whose sense of personal dignity has survived many trials. He frequently forgets that India has always produced men of great culture, courage, and political sagacity. Sir Henry Verney once asked an officer of great experience, "Did you ever know a native whom you would trust as you would an Englishman?" "As many as in England," was the answer. But it has become the habit with some to run down Indians, forgetting



that India has up to this day preserved her code of honour among the right stamp of men. A race proud of its past is naturally sensitive of its *Izzat*, which it values above everything, and yet some officials think little of such things. Lord and Lady Hardinge have set an example of cultivating personal friendships which, if followed, will be rich in fruit. Loyalty in India can be only to persons. It has never been given to principles, and it is hopeless to seek it by statements of profit and loss accounts.

Malabari often told me that we had no leaders among either officials or non-officials who could see into the future, and work patiently for the realization of a definite object. We want men of strong personality, he used to say, to lead us to higher levels of thought and action. He was strongly opposed to the unmeasured use of words which only excite prejudice and rouse popular passion.

He had no faith in hereditary leaders. The salvation of India rests with the aristocracy of intellect, and with the English people generally, he thought. He wanted the English to take up the "white man's burden" in real earnest, and work in the cause of peace and progress with a zeal that would carry conviction home. Malabari was certain that in the dazzling light of true and inspiring work no dark shadows of misunder-

standings could exist. The Anglo-Indian Press should display true imperial instincts by greater generosity and self-restraint, acting as an impartial interpreter between the officials and the people, and commanding the confidence of all classes. Such a change in the Anglo-Indian Press, he held, would be sure to exert a healthy influence on the Indian Press and on opinion generally.

Malabari was by no means opposed to honest criticism. He held that it was the duty of a vigilant press to show up abuses with unflinching courage, but with this difference, that we should never forget that British rule is a necessity, and that India's future is linked up with the future of England. After centuries the discordant elements of Indian society have been brought under control to realize by contrast the bitter fruit of disunion and the golden promise which unity of hearts and minds holds out for the future.

There can be nothing, he often said, more useless than to be constantly looking back to a past that has left us such a legacy as our present. Intellectual activity, unless translated into action, is a vain pursuit leading to wasted energy and emptiness of life. It is idle to look up to Government for what must be done by ourselves. He never agreed with some of our politicians who seem to think that, like the doctrine of Vedanta,

political doctrine has only to be accepted by the intellect to awaken National *Atman* in all its boasted freedom and splendour. Such thinkers light-heartedly brush aside essential factors of public life, and play with the passions and prejudices of the multitude as they play with the problems of existence in philosophic wrangles. The country can gain no more from this political play-acting than it has gained from its metaphysical speculations and the emancipating doctrine of the Vedanta.

Malabari refused to be led into speculative politics, even though many of his friends were ranged on the side which he called "transcendental politics." Anybody can denounce an abuse. It needs valour of the highest kind to show that the programme to which your friends are committed is not right. He never faltered, and bravely adhered to his views, endeavouring always to secure a policy of active co-operation between the rulers and the ruled. He could not believe that God has brought India and England together for purposes of exploitation and mutual hatred. The destiny of the two nations is being shaped silently by invisible hands, he thought, and no one can say what the future is to be for each. Shall England become Indianized, speculative, despotic, a juggler in words and deeds? Shall India become Anglicized, free, independent, self-reliant?

These are questions which the future alone can answer.

Many Anglo-Indians view with apprehension the vanishing traditions of autocratic rule which were not English, and which could not be kept up by free-born Englishmen. Indians, on the other hand, have begun to feel the stirrings of a new life. The impact of the West is generating an electric current which is accumulating in the air. Shall it be harnessed to help the progress of the world, or allowed to run to waste? Who can tell? It all depends on the way things move in the West. If the progressive movement in Europe is affected seriously by luxury, commercialism, and a crowding out of ideals which have brought glory and greatness to the West, there is little hope for India, and her progress will be indefinitely delayed. If the civilization of the West becomes what Emerson hopes, "the evolution of a highly organized man, brought to supreme delicacy of sentiment, in practical power, religious liberty, sense of honour and taste," then the West is destined to set our dull life throbbing with new-born energy, and is bound to raise us to her own standard of culture, making us a nation among the nations of the world.

Malabari often quoted Tennyson, that East and West must unite in the fulfilment of their common destiny. Once they both recognize that they have

to work as comrades in the service of this ancient land all misunderstanding will vanish, and they will hold together for weal and woe. How can India forget the gift of new thought which England has given her, and England renounce the great Eastern Empire which is becoming slowly a part of the Greater Britain? The two together will form an empire such as the world has never known, and which may eventually guarantee the peace and prosperity of both Asia and Europe. This was Malabari's hope of the future, as we often talked these things together.



## CHAPTER XIV

### FAMINE VERSUS LAND TAX

MALABARI did not believe that India was growing poorer, on the contrary he often said that there were signs of coming prosperity. The trade of the country has grown enormously, and the middle men are unquestionably more prosperous than they have ever been before. The value of the land is rising; labour earns better wages; above all a network of canals guarantees in some of the richest areas a full measure of crops, and railways carry the produce to the distant markets of the world. Everything shows increased activity, which means increased wealth. The modern towns with their manifold evidence of humble prosperity, disprove the theory of the "drain," and their expansion bears witness to the value of British Rule.

But Malabari held, on the other hand, that the village people, since the time when the Crown claimed the ownership of the land and exacted a large share of the produce as its due, have never been rich. There were great Rajahs, Maharajahs,

and Maharaos who were wealthy in the old days, and their display of wealth stood for the wealth of India, but the people as a whole were perhaps poorer than they are at present. There is better distribution of wealth now, and there are more individuals who are well-to-do than there were at any time in the history of India; but the condition of the peasant remains much the same, and there is little possibility of improvement as long as the theory of the land tax remains unchanged. Malabari felt keenly for the poor. Whenever there was a famine he went out into the villages, and lived and suffered with the people. He often told me that he wished at times he were one of the sufferers, and not a mere pitying spectator, as he realized the futility of charity doles, when whole families left their homes in search of work and bread, and were lying about hungry and fever-stricken on the roadside, or under the village trees.

During thirty years of active life Malabari visited many famine camps. He recognized the praiseworthy attempts of Government to relieve distress, but he felt it was like allaying the symptoms, instead of effecting a radical cure. The disease itself was gaining in strength, and every attack left the patient weaker with decreased power of resistance.

There are large areas protected by irrigation, a

network of railways helps in the distribution of grain, a benevolent Government is ready to succour and to save, and yet a single failure of crop means the starvation of millions. Malabari tried to discover the real causes. He asked suffering men and women a hundred times why famines were becoming so frequent. "How can we tell," they replied. "We work from morning till evening, from year's end to year's end, but we never have enough to eat. There is no *Barkat*." He asked the officials, who, shifting all responsibility, replied that the relation of cause and effect between a good rainfall, abundant crops, and agricultural prosperity is not more obvious than between the bad monsoon, deficient produce, and suffering people. The answer did not convince Malabari, and he wondered whether, like everything else, the quickened life in India had intensified poverty. His inquiries pursued for a long time revealed to him the truth, that land has always been overtaxed, and that the British Government has done little to afford relief to an over-assessed peasantry. The theory of land tax from the days of Manu has been that all the land was the property of the Crown, and the State was entitled to a full rent. The laws of Manu set the King's share of the cultivators' produce at one-seventh, one-eighth, or one-twelfth. But in the cruel days of land farming that followed, all bounds

were ignored, and the cultivators were in some cases denied even a food allowance.

It is this system which the British Government found, and somehow failed to approach from a broad standpoint. It has never been tested by the standards of taxation which prevail in modern times. The ryot cares little whether the tax he pays is called revenue, rent, or land tax. He knows that the rent realized by the landlord absorbs half of his net produce, and makes a very appreciable difference to him and to his family. The land revenue is fixed at half the landlord's assets, which means that the landlord takes half of the produce from the cultivators, which is obviously too much, as it makes no food allowance for the family of the producer. Whatever the Revenue official may say in its justification, he too would feel the effect of a tax, if half his salary went to meet some impost or tax, or whatever name it might bear. He would then realize that a tax, when it exceeds certain limits, bears a very direct relation to the prosperity of those who pay it.

"The land tax is none of our making," says the Government. And it is quite true. But surely the duty of a civilized Government is to go into the question a little deeper, and to inquire if it leaves a sufficient margin of profit to allow the cultivator to tide over a year of scarcity, and give him an incentive for work.

In the olden times, from the day the crops ripened, the ryot and his family quietly gleaned the grain and lived on the crop; whatever was left was heaped upon the threshing floor, and divided up by the King's officer, who came on the appointed day, and a small present to him settled the details of the transaction. In a famine year there was no produce to divide, and the remission of the revenue followed automatically.

It was Akbar who raised the tax to one-third of the produce, and commuted the Government share into money, taking the price of grain on an average of nineteen years. This system continued till the cruel days of land farming, when the Government, too weak to realize its dues, farmed out land to powerful zemindars who were left to do very much what they liked with the people. But even then there were no revisions of settlement, and no continuous rise in the land tax. In 1826 Sir Thomas Munro wrote on the subject: "Agriculturists, I think, cannot thrive at the present rate of taxation. Half the gross produce of the soil is demanded by Government, which is really too much to leave an adequate provision for the peasant, even with the usual frugal habits of the Indians. Still more, it is an efficient bar in the way of improvement. It keeps the people, even in favourable years, in a state of abject penury, and when the crops fail it involves a



necessity on the part of Government of enormous outlays in the way of remission and distribution which, after all, do not prevent men, women, and children dying. . . .”

There have been many settlements since 1826, and each settlement has maintained its upward tendency, the increases ranging from 25 to 60 per cent. every twenty or thirty years. The continuous rise in the land tax has been slowly nibbling at the margin till it has almost reached the vanishing point, and a single failure of rain means famine.

“No, you misunderstand things,” says the official apologist. “The State would find long term settlements extremely disadvantageous, if it is not only to lose all increment during their currency, but also to forgo part of its dues at their close.” Malabari was never in agreement with this view; he held that whatever added to the prosperity of the people added to the prosperity of the Government. He thought the time had come when the agriculturists should be allowed some rest, and the land revenue policy modified to suit modern conditions. It is futile to argue that things were such and such two hundred years ago. We must examine how the land is now assessed in civilized countries. Baden Powell, the great authority on land tenures in India, defined land tax as a tax on agricultural income, and his

definition is broad enough to be accepted. The ratio of the tax on income should be fixed after making a food allowance for the producer and his family. The food allowance can be calculated at the rates allowed for famine camps and jails. The surplus can then be taxed. But officials shake their heads at the suggestion: they say it leaves little or no surplus to be taxed. And yet they alone feel for the villagers; they scan anxiously with him the merciless skies, they watch with him the withering of the crops, and hear with him the hungry cries of children. Surely they cannot believe that the cultivator has occult sources of income which baffle official scrutiny and provide food for the farmer and his family. Mr. Pursur went into the question fully as a Settlement Officer of Jallandhar, one of the richest districts of the Punjab, and he found that if an ample food allowance were made, the land revenue would have to be reduced considerably. No one has questioned the accuracy of his figures beyond saying that the people must be living on nothing if his conclusions are true. The Punjab is comparatively well off, because the peasant proprietors pay much less in revenue than the tenants of a landlord do in other provinces: but what of other provinces, where the rents are high and holdings small and unprotected? The question of land revenue will have to be considered with reference

to the needs of the agriculturists, and the continuous rise in the standard of living, and the changing conditions which are slowly changing India. It is argued that a gradual increase in the land tax is necessary, as the State cannot call upon the people suddenly to effect a great reduction in their domestic expenditure. Are short term settlements really designed to keep the scale of living at a low level, so that the tax-payer may not get used to better things? Do they mean, in plain English, that the peasant should always remain on the verge of starvation, so as to maintain the anticipated increase in revenue required to meet the ever growing demands of the administration?

No one can assert that land revenue is solely responsible for the poverty of our peasants, but it would be absurd to deny that it is one of the contributory causes. The cultivator goes on tilling his field, which his forefathers tilled and prospered on, while the purchasing power of the rupee has fallen, and the demands on his purse have grown in number. The landlord must have motor cars and electric light, he must travel in ease and comfort, and furnish his house in English style. For this and other luxuries he must have money, and it is the cultivator who has to pay for everything. The poor ryot has no means of protecting himself, the landlord sends his notice of ejectment,

and out he goes. He must pay or go, there is no other alternative. Practically the peasant has been reduced, in not a few places, to the position of a serf. He cannot use wheat, milk, and ghee for himself. He must sell all these to pay his rent. He must live as he can, on the coarsest grain of his produce. His home in many parts of India is a miserable hovel, covered with thatch, which he is not able to renew for years. He has sometimes a *Charpoy* for furniture and a few brass "thalis." But he has often to do without these, sleeping on the bare ground, with nothing but straw to cover him. Husband and wife work the whole day to eke out a bare existence. Even little children have to give their share of labour. They have to weed crops, scare away crows, or take out the cattle to graze. Thus do thousands of families live in helpless ignorance and destitution. Even in normal years their stock of grain disappears before the harvest is over. And then comes, as it must come some day or other, the fight against hunger and illness. A certain proportion of the village population in *ryotwari* villages are always on the verge of starvation. During the normal years there is work, and they manage somehow to pull through. But in years of scarcity there is no work, and they would die off like flies but for a humane Government providing work to keep them alive. It is verily a life of desperate penury.

There are thousands upon thousands who even in good years fail to obtain a full meal, and in time of famine their sufferings shame the glory and grace of modern civilization.

It is the agricultural labourer who never gets any relief. If he leaves the village and goes to the city or the town, he can earn enough to feed and clothe his whole family. But he cannot forsake the calling of his fathers. He only knows how to dig, plough, sow, and reap. The rain falls and the sun shines. The crops grow and prosper, and as the monsoon follows summer, and spring succeeds winter, the fields smile with golden grain. But as soon as the harvesting is over, the grain disappears from the threshing floor, the landlord, the Bunnia and the village servant have their share, while he, the producer, goes home empty to plough and sow, and live on in the hope of better times. Nothing is left to him but that wonderful patience which is his sole inheritance.

The pressure on the soil has increased so much that even the village commons have been partitioned and brought under cultivation. Brahmins and Kchatris, who considered it *infra dig.* to touch the plough, have had to pocket their inherited pride and take to cultivation. Is it right, asked Malabari, to skim off periodically the little excess of income over a rigidly defined standard which the peasant gains by his incessant labour? It is



said that an Englishman pays 40s. per head in taxes while an Indian ryot pays only 4s. This seems astonishing, but the irony of figures becomes apparent, when it is seen that taxes in England work out to one-seventeenth part of a man's income, while in India they represent more than one-half of the landlords' assets.

Malabari pleaded for some ethical limit to the land tax, but official opinion refused to recognize any such obligation. Is it because the agriculturist has not yet learnt to raise his voice and demand a hearing? Taxes which affect the articulate minority are discussed publicly, but the land tax has been constantly on the increase, and yet we hear nothing about it in our Legislative Councils or in the public press. "It cannot be denied," said Lord Curzon, "that upon the incidence of Land Revenue collection must depend the prosperity of those classes to a great measure. There should be left to the cultivator of the soil or the landlord, as the case may be, that margin of profit that will enable him to save in ordinary seasons enough to meet the strain of exceptional misfortunes." Malabari pleaded for nothing more than the translation of this statesmanlike view into practice. He thought the peasantry ought to be allowed enough time to rest and recuperate before a new settlement is attempted. Whatever cripples the resources of the ryot, cripples the

finances of the State. If the peasantry were prosperous they would pay in indirect taxes more than enough to guarantee the financial stability of the State and facilitate the introduction of those reforms that now have to be abandoned or postponed for want of funds.

Malabari was no sentimentalist. He had lived with and worked among the people. He understood the meaning of their dumb despair, the eloquence of their sunken eyes. He realized that the prosperity of India depends on the prosperity of the peasants. The absorption of twenty millions of treasure from a population of three hundred millions may mean only 1s. 4d. per head, but it is a poor index of the state of the peasantry. According to Sir Bamfylde Fuller two cultivated acres provide on an average for three people, and in some localities two persons live upon each acre in cultivation. It goes without saying that high rents and revenue can neutralize the yield from these small holdings, even in good years. As a matter of fact the yield is small, poor, and uncertain. He was of opinion that the land question in India was slowly developing into a momentous problem. And yet apparently the administration makes no allowance for the changed conditions. There are murmurs of discontent even in the villages, a blind groping for escape from burdens becoming steadily heavier. Year by year the rail-

road, the telegraph, the newspaper, the school-master, and other agencies are disseminating new ideas among the people, and slowly modifying the traditions of un murmuring resignation. Yet year after year the Settlement officers go about, increasing the land tax, taking the rise in prices as the basis of increase, though it means also a proportionate rise in the cost of production.

The relations of the peasant with the Sarkar are practically confined to some kind of payment by him. No law, or act, or regulation exists which has not its revenue paying section, whether in the form of direct tax or cess, or toll, or fine, or penalty, or voluntary subscription.

“His poverty,” says an able writer, “is taxed in the Civil Courts; his inability to protect his crops is taxed in the Criminal Courts; his industry is taxed in the Revenue Courts, and his ignorance is taxed everywhere. But over and above all these and other direct or indirect payments which a ryot has to make, he may have to contribute something in cash and kind for the propitiation of minor gods, whose wrath has a greater potentiality for mischief.”

Can the Indian ryot regard as *Ma Bap* officers who come only to tax him? Even the most dutiful son will resent continuous encroachments of the kind. If in a few years there is a wave of discontent in the villages, it will not be right to ascribe

it wholly to the teachings of irresponsible speakers and writers. It will be the result of economic pressure, and the people mainly responsible for it will be those who now refuse to take measure of the changing conditions. It is still time to modify the revenue policy. It may be too late when the villager, like the buffalo, makes up his slow mind and shakes his head at all explanations and compromises. Malabari asked for nothing but a clear and sympathetic interpretation of Lord Curzon's Land Revenue policy. He asked for long term settlements, raising the period from thirty to forty years, and that land revenue should not be raised above 25 per cent. on any holding at any revision of settlement.

## CHAPTER XV

### NATIVE STATES

THE gods that dowered Malabari with the gift of complete understanding brought him into close relations with many of the Indian princes. It was as a friend and advocate of the ruling chiefs and men of noble families that he did some of his best work. The Maharajahs, the Rajahs, and Nawabs realized the value of his advocacy and sought his assistance. He who came to Bombay friendless and unknown, was destined to befriend great chiefs, some of them tracing an unbroken descent from the Sun and the Moon, and exercising almost absolute power over the lives of millions of their subjects.

It was the triumph of Malabari's personal character that he extorted their respect and enjoyed their confidence. He lectured Rajahs and Maharajahs, and they submitted to his remonstrance and advice. It was a position incompatible with the Indian ideas of kingship, but they found in him a champion in sympathy with their past traditions, and deeply concerned in their present welfare.



They bowed before him as they would before a Brahmin.

Some of the chiefs, like the Ruler of Udaipur, are descendants of a house that once ruled India. They have kept their hold on their little kingdoms through centuries of stress and storm, cherishing an intense race pride which even the Moghuls could not subdue. Other important States like Hyderabad, Baroda, Gwalior, and Indore came into existence on the break up of the Moghul empire. They continue to exercise, even up to this day, sovereign rights in their States, and exercise undisputed authority in matters of internal administration.

In the early days of the East India Company the ruling chiefs commanded strong armies, and the British Government was eager to secure them as friends and allies. The Government contracted treaties with them as between equals, there being no question of allegiance to the paramount power. Things, however, slowly changed as the Government of India passed under the Crown, and established its hold on the country. The ruling chiefs gradually felt there was a power above them that compelled obedience, and expected them to do their duty by their subjects.

A ruling prince is generally an Eastern prince, and nothing more. He has little education, but great ideas of his own importance which he

imbibes from his surroundings, and a fearless adventurous spirit which he inherits from his fathers.

The administrative methods in the protected States were mediaeval. The agriculturists ploughed, sowed, and harvested, and paid the State a share of the produce on the threshing floor. The scribes cast up accounts and kept their musty volumes, and administered justice much to their own advantage. They were always humble and submissive in order to gather in their harvest of gold, which was dearer to them than life itself. The chief fought with his neighbours, and occasionally interfered and did justice to some poor man, and his simple act of justice passed into a proverb.

The story of Rawal Chachick, the Maharao of Jaisalmer, reveals the character of the Rajput. He fell ill, and thought he was dying. He sent a message to the Muhammedan ruler of Multan, requesting the boon of Battle, "Judh Din," so that he might die fighting and attain salvation. He assured the Muhammedan Ruler that honourable death was the sole object of the challenge. The Governor of Multan agreed. The Maharajah was rejoiced at the prospect of parting with life like a soldier. He performed his ablutions, worshipped his sword, bestowed gifts on the priests, and withdrew his thoughts from the world. He then gladly went out to the battle-field prepared to

die. The fight continued for four hours, and the Yadu Prince fell with all his kin, performing prodigies of valour.

Such are the old traditions of the princely houses of India, battles fought and lives sacrificed in obedience to the supposed *Dharma* of the race. It is the descendants of these men who have now to submit to the Pax Britannica. They have to accustom themselves to steady work, and conform to the Western ideas of the duties of a ruler.

The Government of India at first refrained from interfering with the native States, but when it grew strong enough it began to enforce its will. The administration in the native States was far from perfect, intrigues and family feuds gave ample opportunities for intervention, and the Paramount Power could not for ever remain an interested spectator, and allow lawlessness to be rampant in the States that it protected. A small beginning was made when political agencies were established in all the important States.

“This system of agencies is responsible,” wrote Malabari, “both for a great deal of good and not a little of evil. It has undoubtedly helped to improve the administration, but it has undermined the power of the ruler by establishing a more or less irresponsible control, which causes bitterness all around. Officers appointed to the diplomatic service were to act obviously as agents between

the Paramount Power and the Native States. But owing to the incapacity of many of the ruling chiefs, the political agents slowly encroached upon the power and authority of the former and came to exercise, indirectly at any rate, supreme control. This position has now become crystallized. The Supreme Government, no doubt, desires to ameliorate the condition of the Native States and their people through their accredited agents. But there are agents and agents. A masterful 'Political' loves to brush aside the ruler as of little account, practically relieving him of all responsibility. Lord Mayo described him as 'a dangerous official.' He himself rules through a Prime Minister or a Council who intrigue against their own chief. It is to their advantage to prevent all good understanding between the Rajah and his Political."

Then comes the system of secret and confidential reporting to the Government, and some police officers are adepts in the art of weaving stories to earn kudos. In this connection Malabari, the sanest and the most sparing critic of the Government wrote: "It (the system of confidential reporting) lends itself to injustice without a chance of redress, and is the cause of serious dissatisfaction among this class of Her Majesty's allies and friends. No man should be condemned unheard. Don't think, because he (the Rajah) smiles and

says, 'Yes, yes' to everything, that he does not feel. He is most sensitive when showing most indifference, most reluctant perhaps when showing the greatest willingness."

It must, of course, be admitted that British influence in the majority of cases works for justice and goes to raise the standard of administration to English ideals of efficiency. Some of the most important States are developing into well equipped administrative units. But the intervention of the Political Agents does not produce a happy impression on the Princes. It is difficult to convince them that the acts of the "Political" are not sometimes due to prejudice, the spirit of contradiction and a petty desire to parade his own importance.

"The love of supremacy, born with the average Briton, is accentuated in this instance," continues Malabari, "by the position assigned to the 'Political,' by his surroundings, and by his ignorance or disregard of the difference in ideals that separates the new mode of administration from the old. The chief must carry out the policy of the *Sahib*, accede to all his wishes, even his whims, or he will be reported. In that report, marked 'Confidential,' it is open to the 'Political' to abuse his position almost to any extent. The other party will have no opportunity of meeting the allegations against him, or justifying his inability



to accede to the wishes of the accuser. In a majority of cases the report stands at headquarters. It is not to be supposed that the chief is always blameless. If he were, the worst Political could not do him the least harm. The chief, no doubt, needs guidance, friendly advice, and in some cases control, but this should be open, responsible and honourable. How many innocent men and women have suffered under this system of reporting, and how many unworthy ones have gained under it? Why should not an opportunity be given to the accused to meet the accusation made behind his back. . . . At present the Rajah alone, less fortunate than the humblest of the Queen Empress's subjects, is thus condemned without a hearing."

Many of our chiefs have taken the line of least resistance, and devote themselves entirely to sport or idle amusement. They leave the States to be administered by Ministers. They would be autocratic rulers, or not at all. They have no serious business in life. In the early days the Princes were usually brought up to be courageous and brave. They were expert riders and swordsmen. Most of them can now only be charged with idleness, which leads inevitably to mischief, and the waste of fine opportunities. "They might be little gods on earth, and they are mostly jockeys and fops," said Emerson, of the English nobility of his

day. The remark applies with greater truth in the case of many an Indian chief.

This is an age of enlightenment, and there are ruling Princes who are trying to do their duty by their States and by the paramount power. Unfortunately, the better educated and more capable a chief is, the more he feels the anomaly of his position. The more he wishes to make a stand for his rights, the more determined is the opposition he has to face. It is here that the system fails, as it makes no allowances for persons who are anxious to administer their States justly, and to do the best they can for their people and for the supreme Government.

This was Malabari's opinion. Things have changed in recent times, and the Princes are allowed much more freedom, and are encouraged to prove themselves worthy of their high positions, but in former times, many a well meaning chief had to leave the administration alone, reserving himself for dress rehearsals and grand Durbars.

To be fair, however, I must take leave to quote my own experience. At the instance of Malabari I was persuaded to accept a position in a Native State, and I was prepared to encounter much interference from the political agent. In fact at the first meeting I told my Political frankly, that I thought dual control was not in the interest of the administration, and that I hoped he would not

encourage people to talk to him about the internal administration. I little thought that I should have to change my views. I found him a friend of the Prince and the people, always refusing to interfere, and ever ready to give all the assistance in his power for the well-being of the State.

The fact is that the Government of India guarantees protection to the States, and the subjects of these States also look up to the Paramount Power to protect them, and secure for them the same rights and privileges which their neighbours in British India enjoy. The political agent has to interfere occasionally, but the treaties provide for no interference of the kind, and the chiefs resent it. It would no doubt help in the final settlement and satisfaction of all parties, if the obligations of the Princes towards their subjects, and the Paramount Power were defined so as to remove all future misunderstandings. The Imperial Government ought to provide a tribunal which may adjudicate in an open and honourable way in all matters of importance between the people and the Prince. At present there is no agency in the whole machinery of the Indian Government which may be appealed to when there are serious disputes between the Rajah and his subjects. The decisions of the Government of India, so far as the Native States are concerned, follow no precedent; and are as variable as the wind.

Malabari held that the Government should try, with the more enlightened of the chiefs, a policy of confidence and hearty good will. The younger generation differ from their ancestors in many respects. They want more freedom of action and movement. They do not like asking for permission in matters of detail, which are of no great importance. What is necessary now is to provide the States with a constitution to guarantee continuity of good administration, and to strengthen the possibilities of progress. The Maharajah of Bikanir has shown the way, and the Government of India provides a good model for a constitution, which, if followed in all the important States, would greatly help to place their administration on a sound footing. This would make the work of the political officer easier, and improve relations between him and the chief.

The problem of the social relations between officials and non-officials requires adjustment almost all over India. Besides the three hundred ruling States, some of them as big as the British Isles, and and others no larger than two square miles in area, there are many thousand families of as noble a descent, with pedigrees losing themselves in remote mythology. They have their own traditions and characteristics, known within a radius of fifty miles, with an hereditary tenantry bound to them by ties of long connection. Then

there are millions of soldierly families, with traditions of fearlessness and *Izzat*, each living on its own small estate, known and respected in the neighbourhood. Are these chiefs, nobles and soldiers never to play any part in the administration of the country—which their forefathers ruled? The Western educated classes look down upon them—and the officials take notice of them only on ceremonial occasions. It is a miracle of English character that, without any special training, the Civil Service has built up such a glorious reputation, and established an administration which is the envy of other nations, but the time has arrived when a special training would be of great use. An Indian civilian has to act as a policeman, judge, magistrate, political officer, and later on as head of a Provincial Government. Is proficiency in mathematics, or languages, the best equipment for such a ruler of men? How can European classics or mathematics serve a man who is usually ignorant of the language, history, traditions and administrative machinery of a people so different from his own? He acquires his knowledge of Indian life from criminals and beggars, respectable or otherwise, who every morning come to see the “Sunny face of the Huzoor,” and to secure a post for “the slave’s son.” He naturally acquires an unconcealed contempt for things—Indian.



“ I can imagine nothing more mischievous, more dangerous, more fatal to the permanence of English rule in India than for the young civil servant to go to that country with the idea that it is a sink of moral depravity, an ant’s nest of lies, for no one is so sure to go wrong, whether in public or private life, as he who says in his haste : All men are liars.” Thus wrote Max Müller, and Malabari was of opinion that any one who felt himself above working with us, should not be allowed to join the civil or military services in India. He held, too, that a course in Indian history, Indian law, and Indian languages should form the principal features of an examination for the Indian Civil Service. “ Let us ask our English rulers and fellow subjects,” he wrote, “ to treat us as their equals, and, where we are wanting, to push us up to their level, rather than keep us where we are, on a crust of comfort, such as we throw to the lame dog whom we do not wish to kick off the stile. In short, within the measure of our capacity, and the circumstances of the country, there should be an approximation in the methods of Government between India and England, with equality as the basis both of public administration and personal intercourse.” In India the Englishmen have no precedents to follow but those of their own making. The beginning may well be made with the ruling chiefs. They should be educated

and trained for their high calling and their autocratic tendencies controlled by a constitution, and a clear definition of their responsibilities towards their own people and the Paramount Power. Let it be understood that Anglo-Indians are not alone to blame for the gulf between the rulers and the ruled. Much more to blame generally are our own countrymen, who lead the English officials astray by maligning and misrepresenting their own kith and kin. Let every Englishman coming out to India approach his work with high ideals, such as inspired Sir William Jones.

“India,” wrote Max Müller, “wants more such dreamers as he was, standing alone on the deck of his vessel, and watching the sun diving into the sea with the memories of England behind, and the hope of India before him, feeling the presence of Persia and its ancient monarchs, and breathing the breezes of Arabia and its glowing poetry. Such dreamers know how to make their dreams come true, and how to change their visions into realities. And as it was a hundred years ago, so it is now, or at least so it may be now. There are many bright dreams to be dreamt about India, and bright deeds to be done in India if only you will do them. Though many great and glorious conquests have been made in the history and literature of the East since the days when Sir

William Jones landed at Calcutta, depend upon it, no young Alexander here need despair because there are no kingdoms left for him to conquer on the ancient shores of the Indus and the Ganges."

## CHAPTER XVI

### HIS CREED

**S**IRDAR UMRAO SINGH, who, all through life, has been a student of comparative religion and philosophy, once summed up Malabari's creed in the words of Hafiz:

"Do what you like, but do no injury to another. For in my religion there is no sin greater than this."

Malabari was too religious to accept the metaphysical abstractions or broad generalizations of Pantheism, and too positive in intellect to conform to useless rites. His own creed was very simple. He believed in a personal God and asked no questions. Our finite mind cannot comprehend His infinite nature, he said, and life is too sacred a trust to be wasted in subtle speculations. How can we know Him who transcends all knowledge? We can feel His presence in our best moments, and experience His love in our hours of trial. It is traced upon every human heart blessed with lowliness and simplicity. Every human action is subject to laws which act with mathematical cer-

tainty. The fruit of a moral act is peace; of an immoral act, restlessness and misery.

“In this world two principles are working side by side, the principle of goodness or self-denial, and the principle of evil or self-assertion. The more we assert ourselves the more we commit ourselves in the net of causes and effects, which know no grace or forgiveness. All our actions are determined by forces of our own creation. It is only when we have learnt to deny ourselves, and seek refuge in Him, that we find freedom and peace. From time to time great prophets come to point out the path of self-denial for the salvation of man. Those who follow the path are freed, and find the Kingdom of God; those who wander away from it learn, through suffering and pain, disappointment and despair, that in Him alone satisfaction is to be found. We cannot know the why and wherefore of things. But we know that the world is His, and our souls are His, and He is ‘All-Father’ of the universe, as the Vedas call Him. The more we try to solve the mystery of the universe the more we are confused. But when we surrender ourselves to His will, we feel His presence, and a strange peace steals over our troubled minds. The more we adore Him, the more we feel the inflow of a new strength—a new faith and a strange approximity to Him, our Father.”

Malabari, however, did not believe in the sub-



jugation of intellect in its own sphere. He thought that reason must have full freedom to judge mundane things, and to analyse all that prevents the soul of man from rising to the source of his being, remembering, however, its own limits as the servant of the soul. The message which the prophets have delivered, he said, was the message of God to man sent through his accredited messengers, who came to point out the path of salvation. His creed was, therefore, a curious blend of positivism and theism.

He often told me that one must die to an unreal life to enter upon the real life, that it is adoration of self which is the root of misery. Men and women chase bubbles and barter their happiness in the vain pursuit, and yet bubble after bubble bursts, leaving in the hand "which crushes it a cold damp drop of disappointment."

In his moment of trial, Malabari sought consolation in prayer, and he said that when the heart was pure, and the mind concentrated, he felt as if God's grace flowed into him, transcending all his faculties. The fragrance of such moments lingered for days and days.

None of the world's miserable antipathies limited the outgoings of his love, "broad and deep and wide as the heart of God." He once read to me Harrison's "Confessions of Faith" as if he were reading the Bible. It almost sums up his own

ideas; and I cannot do better than quote it in full to convey the sum of his own belief: "The faith of each man is bound up with the destinies of his fellows. As they suffer, he suffers, as they flourish, he flourishes; as they live hereafter, he lives hereafter. To live with them and for them, to die with them and for them, it is all we can desire for happiness and peace. Thus let each live in zeal and in joy, clearing from life all doubt, inaction and gloom, seeing ever more clearly the solid foundation of his faith, the proved truth of human life, feeling ever more deeply that duty and happiness can meet only in this: To live for others, yet acknowledge ever more devoutly the sublimity, which overrules us, loving ever more ardently the boundless goodness of human nature, its perpetual grace and truth and beauty, and in it seeing the spirit of its Maker. Thus at last the soul within and the activity without may join in one harmony and one work, devoted only to return, by affection and sacrifice, some infinitesimal fraction of that life-long service, which each of us from birth to death receive from each and all. Thus each may live happy and active, accepting every task and any lot, with humble cheerfulness and wise content, and dying when death comes, as they die in battle, over whose bodies their comrades pass in victory, regretting only that they fall in the first hours of the fight.

“May something of this spirit yet grow in me; may I yet have time to begin my duty to undo the sin and waste of youth, to give my mite also to the common good, growing each day more clear in faith, more zealous in act, more loving and gentle and true. Thus may I live, if I have yet to live, in labour and in trust, and die, if I am now to die, in sure hope of good to me and to all men.”

Malabari read this with such intense feelings that I too was deeply moved. “Some such creed,” he added, “will be the creed of the future. What terrible persecutions have darkened the pages of History in the name of God,” he murmured, after a pause, “and yet all mankind bows in worship to him who is our Father. May it not be that it is through sorrow and suffering, through streams of blood and oceans of tears, that the human spirit is destined to rise to the realization of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man?”

“No one really seems to believe now,” I remarked; “Hindus, Muhammedans, and Christians alike have become worshippers of Mammon. Even the Parsis have been conquered by insidious doubt, which is more irresistible than the march of an army. What good are Towers of Silence, when the faith in the sacred fire is gone?”

“It is considered,” he replied, with a far away look, “more *à la mode* to speak of religion with

contempt. I often doubt whether what we call narrow and sectarian may not be better than no belief at all. India has enjoyed from time immemorial the reputation of being the land of spiritual aspirations, and even here superstition has usurped the place of religion, and a subtle philosophy sapped the foundations of faith. The poor and ignorant seek salvation in fetish worship, and often make tremendous sacrifices for what passes for religion. Why should there be such a tangle?"

"There could be nothing more broad than the philosophy of the Vedanta," I rejoined, "and yet it offers no consolation to the human heart. The Brahma knows not love, nor hate nor forgiveness, and in the words of Mallock it has a 'heart of frost or flame, without even the tenderness of tears.' How can it draw human hearts to love and devotion? If you take away the Vedanta, then Hinduism is nothing but a system of rituals."

"I don't believe," Malabari went on, "in elaborate ceremonials. Truth is simple, and it alone has the power to quell spiritual discords and to heal the heart-ache. Everything else is a mere palliative, a dose of opium which allays the symptoms, but does not cure the disease. The Vedanta is clothed in intellectual garments of splendour, but it is useless for the purposes of salvation. The highest aspiration of a Vedanti is

to reach an intellectual frigidity in which there is no room for the warmth of love. How can it satisfy the eternal cravings of the human heart for love which understands all and forgives all? The East has given the world many religions and it may yet give another, firing elements of moral beauty in a blaze of devout aspirations. This is not a vain hope. The world is becoming more and more a united whole, and with the vanishing of geographical boundaries and barriers of language, men may find that they are one at heart though not in creed, and that God is the All-Father. The subtle filaments which unite humanity are becoming more and more defined, and where people formerly saw an antagonist, they are beginning to find a brother. Hindu, Christian, Zoroastrian, and Muhammedan may some day find that the mental spectrum, which broke up the divine ray, has vanished, leaving an unbroken sunbeam to vivify all the religions of the world."

"Mystics in all ages have proclaimed this inner unity," I said, "and it is the triumph of their creed that its truth has endured for all countries, all nations and all times. Perhaps as elder brothers of humanity they realized what will become the common knowledge of the whole world in its manhood: unity of God and the brotherhood of man."

"The Yoga system of the Hindus speaks with



the certainty of experience," he replied. "It does not discuss eternal verities from a mere philosophical standpoint, but, in a hundred aphorisms, lays down rules of conduct for the attainment of higher knowledge. It affirms that he who has the power to rise to a divine ecstasy, or *Samadhi*, can do so by complete self-surrender to God, and laying bare his heart to grace. It is affirmed that God Himself takes up His abode in the heart of His devotee, when he sees, feels, hears nothing but God. The knower, the known and the knowledge become one. The religion of the mystic will probably be the religion of the world, uniting all beliefs in one organic faith. Perhaps the new religion will rise in India. Here Christianity and Islam, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism, Hinduism, with its many sects, act and react on one another, and may all merge into one grand world religion. In the glowing hour of a new-found faith all mysteries will become clear from without, and transparent from within."

This was Malabari's hope for the future.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE TAJ GARDENER

MALABARI hardly ever stayed in Bombay for a full month. He was always on the move. He met men of all classes and conditions. He learnt from them that happiness was not the monopoly of the wealthy, as people imagined; it came like sunshine to rich and poor alike. It was particularly the inheritance of those who had a complete understanding of life and found the joy of existence full, perfect, and all sufficing. For himself, he said, he had the best years of his life as a boy when he wandered in the streets of Surat, and that later travelling was the great solace of his life. He was never tired of visiting Agra, and spending his evenings at the Taj. His remarks about the Taj gardener may well be read with advantage by our educated countrymen.

“Drove to the Taj in the morning with Mr. Baij Nath,” he writes. “Met Mr. Smith, the gardener. Could not help admiring at a glance his appearance and intelligence. Tall, well-built, handsome in green old age, not only a gardener,

but also a student and a politician, with an eye for almost everything that is beautiful in nature and in art, and familiar with the outlines of modern science. This is Mr. Smith, the Taj gardener. He discussed the social topics with us for a few minutes, then drew us on to his favourite subjects—agriculture and landscape gardening. He told us something about the books he had been recently reading, and finally passed on to politics. He spoke about the situation in Ireland, about Mr. Parnell and Mr. Gladstone, showing how he feared the Premier was halting between principle and expediency. Then he spoke of the politics of Queen Anne's time, and of the glorious days of Cromwell, winding up: 'Upon my word, I cannot see what is going to happen this time.' As I strolled about with Mr. Smith listening to his shrewd, intelligent remarks on things generally, I confess I felt humbled to the dust. What was I, a leading journalist, a thinker, a patriot, and a heap of other things as the newspapers describe me, before this simple English gardener. I have been sometimes addressed with two and sometimes with three letters after my name, also as Town Councillor, and so on. An eminent civilian the other day pointed me out as a likely member of the Secretary of State's Council. About four years ago, I narrowly escaped quarrelling with my old friend, Colonel Waller, by telling

him I was nothing at all. Happening to be under his roof for a night, I asked Colonel Waller how he had obtained his V.C. He spoke to me about his Chitral campaign, and then asked (in poor Ali Baba's style), how I had smuggled myself in the *cerements* of a C.I.E. at so early an age? I told Colonel Waller there was some mistake. But he laughed knowingly. He then asked if the Town Council gave me about a couple of hundred for pocket money. I again pleaded not guilty, at which the gallant Colonel was fairly roused. 'What? you are not going to tell me you ain't a member of the Town Council, the Corporation, and all that? I have read your name in the reports.' I assured him I was an honest man, at which he laughed again, and said he would have satisfaction out of me in the morning. At breakfast the Colonel was restored to equanimity: 'Oh, I think it is a Parsi gentleman from Bengal, who is a C.I.E.,' he explained. I asked, as the light dawned upon me, 'Don't you think Bengal and Malabar are wide apart?' 'By Jove they are, but you deserve to be a knight,' added my warm-hearted friend. I said I preferred another cup of tea from him, and as I took it, I explained how it was, that I wished and prayed to be nobody in particular. But the superstition is wide spread. Outsiders often mistake me for somebody; at times for a big swell. All that is nonsense. But

though I am nobody in particular, I will not affect to be so modest as to deny that I am as decent and intelligent a person as any of my years and position. That is my opinion about myself. And yet I, a public journalist, could but feel my worthlessness in the presence of Mr. Smith, only a gardener, whom I look upon as almost in every way my superior. What makes him so? I tell myself, Mr. Smith is a whole man, whereas I am less than three-fifths of a man with all my pretensions. And what made Mr. Smith, the gardener, a whole man? He is not an M.A. of the Bombay University, nor a B.L. of Bengal, nor a D.C.L. of Lahore. Where on earth did he get all his knowledge and culture from? How did he learn to find true happiness in his knowledge, and to diffuse that happiness? I say, he got it mainly at home, from his mother. It was maternal influence particularly, and domestic associations generally that made Mr. Smith the whole man. He is a force in politics as in social matters—one likely to make an excellent householder, patriot and public man. Thus at the very outset Mr. Smith had an immense advantage over me, which he takes care to maintain. He was born under natural conditions, and is free from most of the ailments to which I am a prey. He did not marry early, as most of us Indians do, ruining body and mind, and marring prospects of public usefulness. The difference



between the English patriot and the Indian is little more than the difference between the mother in England and the mother in India. What grievously unfavourable conditions we have been working under! Are we not, many of us, abortive births physically? Born in misery, we grow up in ignorance at home. What can our mother teach us? Then we go to school and are taught grammar and geography. Some of us pass on to College, and stuff our muddled heads at the expense of the decrepit body. Soon after, in many cases even before this, we have to find food for hungry stomachs at home, and at the same time we are expected to be thinkers, philosophers, and patriots. All this, of course, we cannot do. What little we can do under the circumstances indicates the marvellous vitality of the race. But in attempting to do a little, we generally break down in mid career. We are old before forty; our women old before thirty. General culture, the power of being happy, is out of the question. It is hard to say, but say it I must, that I know few native gentlemen, the best educated, the most advanced of my acquaintance, who are his equal."

He who would raise the flower must cultivate the proper soil. Malabari often said: "The British can do no more than guarantee peace and give free opportunities for development. They have shown what absence of caste and love of freedom com-

bined with a constant desire for improvement can accomplish. Our leaders must now realize that you cannot revive a dying tree by sprinkling water on its leaves and branches. The roots must be opened out to sun and air to receive fresh nourishment; without a social readjustment there can be no Indian nation."

Malabari went north and south, east and west, devoted to his mission of liberating women from ignorance, and men from caste and superstition. He found his men apathetic, slow, and all hope of the future lay in enlisting the sympathies of women in the cause of reform and progress. It was after many years' experience and mature thought that he conceived the idea of a *Seva Sadan* for training Sister Ministrants. The *Seva Sadan* was to afford shelter to young widows and others who wished to consecrate their lives to service, irrespective of caste and creed. He wished to inspire them with ideals of service and sacrifice, so that they might go out into the crowded cities and sunbaked villages to preach their gospel of social freedom. He hoped at the start that his countrymen would respond to his call, and when they failed him he resolved, on a small scale, to make a beginning and give a model "Home" of his own. He knew what he wanted. His purpose was to point the way by a concrete example; his hope, that others would be found to follow the

lead and carry out the idea. There was, however, hardly any response, and he therefore continued his makeshift work. All through life he was driven into undertakings to which he felt that his powers and opportunities were unequal. The tortured effort and the heavy sense of disappointment that followed, explain the intensity of the mental strain that gave him sleepless nights, and yet till his last pulse beat he never failed or faltered in giving his best to his motherland.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE END

**M**ALABARI was very reserved and shy with strangers. His sensitiveness followed him into Society, and constituted his pleasure and pain. It was only in the circle of his own immediate friends—those whom he loved and trusted with all the fullness of his heart—that he could throw off the whole burden of his life which almost overweighed him. In his happier moods he diffused the most fascinating cheerfulness around him. He loved to be away in the hills, and took a keen delight in arranging excursions whenever we were together. It seemed a relief to him to forget the sorrow and disappointment which his multifarious activities brought him. His heart opened out under the sunshine of love and comprehension, and he drew out from each all that was best and purest. He loved nature, and, above all, beautiful autumn days in the Himalayas. A gloomy day affected him like a misfortune, while a bright day filled him with joy, and he became radiant like a child. He was very

fond of watching the sunset on the snowy ranges, and he would describe the essential points of form and colour in clouds and sky with a far away look, as if he had sent out his soul to dip in rivers of glory.

One evening we were returning from Kufri. We had wandered into jungles and rested on emerald carpets. We had enjoyed the immanent repose of the hills and all the wondrous loveliness of one of those incomparable days which we occasionally have in Simla. The evening had slowly crept on as we came to the main road near the Viceregal "Retreat." Malabari stopped with a strange light playing upon his face, and with up-raised arm pointed to the sky: "Look, the gates of Heaven have been flung open," he murmured. "I should like to pass on, on some such evening," he murmured after a pause. The sun was setting behind the fleeting clouds of gold, and a great glow of light illumined the hills linking heaven and earth for a moment in its splendour. We walked on in silence. It was not long before his wish was fulfilled.

Malabari spent lavishly for others; he was ready to give himself, his money, his powers, his peace. For himself he wanted nothing; he grudged even the few annas which he spent on himself. He bought a ready-made suit of clothes and kept it for years, and yet hardly a post went out without



a cheque or two from him to those who sought his help. He yearned for peace, and till the last moment he worked for others, thinking it was his duty to the work-a-day world he was born into.

He always said: "There is but one thing that never can turn into suffering, and that is the good we have done. The soul that grows nobler has everlasting treasures." He did not believe in what goes by the name of progress, as long as it was only material. He would only allow the name to moral improvement, to the growth in increasing numbers of better and nobler men and women. He wanted Society to become an organized whole in which the wise rule. We talked for hours together, and he was never weary of speaking on subjects which he thought deserved far more attention than they received. He asked me very often to carry on his work in the cause of female emancipation from child widowhood, purdah, and social inequality.

In the summer of 1912, I and others of his intimate friends were gathered together at Simla. But he was much too occupied with his *Seva Sadan*, and threatened to remain in the sweltering heat of Bombay. The institution was giving him a good deal of anxiety. We wrote and entreated, but he bravely held on, till Umrao Singh reached Simla, and we wrote a joint letter asking him to come. He could resist no longer, and tele-

graphed that he was coming. Zulfiqar Ali Khan went to receive him at Kalka, and Umrao Singh and myself welcomed him near the Railway Station. It was such a pleasure to be with him again, and we were all so happy to be together. He was looking unusually well, and full of wit and humour. We had our walk round Jakko the same evening, and on our return General Sir O. Moore Creigh called, and they sat talking together. They were great friends and talked on, till it was late, and I stepped in to say good night. They both rose and shook hands as the Commander-in-Chief also found it was time for him to make a move.

"We shall resume our talk again," said Malabari.

"Of course and soon," said the Commander-in-Chief, little knowing that he had shaken his friend for the last time by the hand.

When General Sir O. Moore Creigh read my "Rambles" in manuscript, the gallant old soldier's eyes grew moist. "It is like talking to old Malabari again," he said. We had our walk together next day. It was raining on the third, and he sent me to Viceregal Lodge to see the Maharajah of Gwalior, who wanted me to go away with him for a few days. He had already obtained Malabari's consent, though I was reluctant to leave him so soon. However, it was all arranged, and I was to return quite soon, and report progress to our friend. We had tea together, and then I left with

a promise to come back in the evening. I was detained by the Maharajah till seven p.m., and as it was then drizzling, I thought I would go home, and see him in the morning. Alas! that was not to be. He was waiting for me all the while, and just before going to dinner, he said, "Jogi won't come." I telephoned to him after dinner, and we had a good long chat. He had been rallying Umrao Singh, telling him he could never depend on Punjabees, and then suddenly left the telephone, and went up to his own room. Hardly five minutes later Zulfiqar Ali Khan telephoned saying that our friend had fainted, and that I must come at once, and then almost immediately "our friend is no more." I could not believe the news, and hurried to Bothwell Lodge with a doctor, but it was too late, he was gone. It seemed God wanted him at once and he had to go.

His Majesty the King wired to His Excellency the Viceroy: "Please convey to the family of Malabari the sincere regret, with which the Queen and I have heard of the death of our old friend. His death will be a loss to the country."

The Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief sent their representatives and His Honour, Sir Louis Dane, Sir Edward Maclagan, Sir James Du Boulay, accompanied the funeral, with Nawab Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Sirdar Umrao Singh, Mr.

Framjee and myself as pall bearers—while the Honourable Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya represented the Hindus. The Maharajahs of Gwalior, Patiala and Bikaner sent wreaths, and the whole of India mourned the loss of a man who had done so much to sweeten the life of his people.

His body rests in the Parsi Cemetery at Simla just as he had desired, in the middle of a forest of deodars and in the heart of the Himalayas. Years before his death, he wrote:

## I.

If I have, O God! my duty done,  
What need for more? a tattered sheet  
And—owing smallest debt to none—  
An humble grave in length four feet,

\* \* \* \*

## 2.

Obscure and nameless in some wild  
Or at some mountain-foot be raised:  
And in Thine honour be engraved  
These three words only—*God be praised.*

A year has come and gone since our rambles on this earth came to a sudden end. His son Pheroze and other friends gathered to offer our prayers for his soul on his death anniversary. It seemed to us he was not dead. His spirit surely was with us, and we should meet again beyond the border.

Pheroze wanted a gravestone for his tomb,

though I am sure he would have preferred to let the grass grow over it. We walked into the adjoining cemetery to select a design, and lo, the gravestone that appealed to me, was the one that covered the grave in which Mr. Smith, the Taj gardener, rested. It is a strange coincidence—but they have come near each other again, and renewed their friendship, and perhaps again found their joy in flowers and fragrance together.

Though he is gone, he will live in the hearts of his friends, and I shall consider the few years I passed with him as the greatest thing in my life. May peace be his!

THE END





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